DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 267 156 UD 024 779

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TITLE The Hmong Resettlement Study Site Report: Fresno, California.
INSTITUTION Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Refugee Resettlement (DHHS), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 7 Jul 83
CONTRACT HHS-600-82-0251
NOTE 143p.; For related documents, see UD 024 774-784.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acculturation; Adult Learning; *Asian Americans; Community Attitudes; Economic Development; *Educational Experience; *Employment Opportunities; Employment Patterns; English (Second Language); Immigrants; Job Training; Labor Market; *Land Settlement; Migration Patterns; *Refugees; Welfare Recipients; Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS *California (Fresno County); *Hmong People

ABSTRACT

This document reports on the resettlement of Hmong refugees in Fresno County, California: what their employment experience has been, which resettlement efforts have been successful, and how current resettlement efforts could be altered to improve the Hmong's long-tern adjustment. Much of the data was gathered through personal interviews with Hmong and individuals working with Hmong in Fresno County. The first section gives general information about Fresno County and describes the general population, other refugee groups, the economic base (farming), economic problems, housing, problems of refugee services, and the very negative community reaction to Hmong refugees. Section II gives information on the size and history of the Hmong population who, according to one source, numbered approximately 10,000 in May, 1983. Section III considers a variety of resettlement issues, including lack of English proficiency, lack of job skills, discrimination, welfare dependence, lack of job search skills, and the lack of entrepreneurial experience and technical assistance for farmers and small businessmen. Also discussed are education issues, in particular the feelings of extreme disorientation the Hmong feel in the schools and their sense that the education is inappropriate for their needs. The final section considers secondary migration, welfare disincentives, socialization problems, and psychological issues. The paper concludes with extensive appendices, which include Fresno County welfare caseloads, refugee services available, organization of services, and transcripts of letters translated into English from Hmong in Fresno County. (CG)

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THE HMONG RESETTLEMENT STUDY

SITE REPORT:

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

July 7, 1983

Prepared for:

Office of Refugee Resettlement
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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This project has been funded with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under Contract No. HHS 600-82-0251. The contract, which was competitively awarded to Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, is for a total contract amount of $225,029. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, nor does mention of organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

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PREFACE

The Hmong Resettlement Study is a national project funded by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. The study is the joint undertaking of Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (Portland, Oregon), the University of Minnesota and Lao Family Community (Santa Ana, California). The major purposes of the Study are to examine closely the resettlement of Hmong refugees in the United States, focusing on the following issues:

What has been the resettlement experience of the Hmong?

- o How are the Hmong faring in terms of employment, dependence, and adjustment?
- o Are there areas of employment in which the Hmong have been particularly successful?
- o What do resettlement workers and the Hmong regard as the major impediments to effective Hmong resettlement and self-sufficiency?
- o What role does secondary migration play in the resettlement of the Hmong? What are the reasons for secondary migration among this group? What are the implications for resettlement strategies?

What resettlement efforts and economic strategies have provided effective results for the Hmong?

- o How are problems being handled? What kinds of solutions are being tried, by different resettlement communities and by the Hmong themselves?
- o How many and what kinds of entrepreneurial economic development projects involving the Hmong are currently in operation, e.g., farming projects, Pa ndau cooperatives? How were they developed and how successful are they?
- o What kinds of Hmong employment strategies have been particularly successful?

How might current strategies be changed to result in more effective resettlement and long-term adjustment of the Hmong?

- o How might resettlement be conducted differently for the Hmong? What new projects and approaches are being considered by those involved in Hmong resettlement? How would the Hmong want resettlement to be done differently?

- How can the Hmong be resettled in a way that better utilizes their strengths and unique characteristics?

- What do the Hmong want for themselves? What do Hmong view as essential for effective resettlement? What are their goals for the future? For the next generation of Hmong?

Research conducted in the project included analysis of existing data about the Hmong, compilation of information gathered through numerous informal face-to-face and telephone conversations with Hmong informants across the country (in nearly every Hmong settlement which could be identified) and on-site observations, group meetings and personal interviews with Hmong individuals and families (as well as resettlement officials, service providers and members of the host communities). On-site case studies of Hmong resettlement were conducted in seven selected cities:

Orange County, California
Fresno, California
Portland, Oregon
Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota
Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas
Fort Smith, Arkansas
Providence, Rhode Island

Staff from the participating institutions worked as a team to conduct the overall project and the seven case studies:

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The results of the project are available to the public as a series of reports published by the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). Copies may be ordered from:

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Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota
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Details of Fieldwork Conducted in Fresno

Project staff, (Stephen Reder, Mary Cohn, Shur Vang Vangyi, Dang Vang, and Thongsay Vang) spent several weeks in April and May, 1983, conducting the research in Fresno. Eight group meetings were held: An entry meeting with leaders from 20 major kin groups in Fresno, 4 meetings with household heads from particular clan groups, attended by 15-25 persons; meetings with special groups: college and college-bound students, women and adolescents; and a large group meeting, held in a rented auditorium, attended by 150-200 people.

Indepth interviews were conducted with seven Hmong informants (often on multiple occasions), and eight Hmong families (some who were farming, some who were otherwise employed, some who were unemployed). Twenty-one interviews were conducted with officials from various private, city, country and state agencies serving Fresno's Hmong including individuals active in public schools, adult ESL programs, employment services, welfare, voluntary organizations, hospitals, farm advising, elective office, interagency groups, and so forth. Descriptive and statistical information was compiled from numerous documents, as cited in the report.

It is our policy not to name the particular individuals in the field studies. But we do wish to acknowledge the kind cooperation and assistance of the many people who gave some of their time to the study. Their help was invaluable and we could not have completed the work without them. A few individuals, in particlar, went out of their way to assist the Fresno study and we would like to acknowledge their help: Sam Alvidrez, Sam Bliatout, Paul Moua, Nancy Richardson, Chue Thao, Tony Vang, Bob Whittaker, and Pao Xiong. Naturally, acknowledging their help here in no way is meant to suggest that these individuals agree with or endorse the findings reported here. The authors alone are responsible for the content.

I. GENERAL CONTEXT

A. Setting and Climate

Set in the vast central valley of California, Fresno County contains 5,978 square miles. The San Joaquin Valley has a hot, arid climate and an abundance of rich, fertile soil. When suitably irrigated, these conditions support intense cultivation of a wide variety of crops throughout much of the year. The county has a long history as a rural farming area, although urbanization has been increasing dramatically in recent years. By 1980, only 22% of the county's population was classified as rural by the Census, still substantially higher than the statewide figure of 8.7%.

B. General Population

There were more than half a million (514,621) inhabitants of Fresno County in the 1980 Census, up nearly 25% from 1970. Almost all of this population increase has taken place in urban areas. Seventy percent (358,823) of the county's population lives in the Fresno SMSA (42% of the county lives in Fresno City proper, another 28% in the urban fringe around Fresno).

Like many areas of California, the Fresno area has a multi-ethnic heritage and a rich array of immigrants and speakers of languages other than English. According to 1980 Census data, 10.6% of Fresno County residents are foreign born and approximately 25% speak a language other than English at home.

C. Other Minority Groups

According to 1980 Census data, 29.3% of the County's population is of Spanish origin (93% of whom are of Mexican origin).[1] The Census reports

that 26.3% of the county population is non-White. The largest racial groups, as defined by the Census, are Blacks (4.9%), Japanese (1.3%) and American Indians (0.9%). There are many other significant groups of Asian ancestry in the county as well, including substantial numbers of Chinese, Filipino, and Asian Indians. Excluding Southeast Asian refugees, the various groups of Asian ancestry together number about 3% of the population.

The 1980 Census lists the following racial composition for Fresno County:

	Number	Percent
White	379,279	73.7
Black	25,339	4.9
Japanese	6,471	1.3
American Indian	4,716	0.9
Chinese	3,124	0.6
Filipino	2,319	0.5
Asian Indian	1,586	0.3
Vietnamese	590	0.1
Korean	427	0.1
Hawaiian	169	--
Samoan	53	--
Guamanian	38	--
Eskimo	20	--
Other	90,479	17.6

The 590 Vietnamese enumerated in the 1980 Census probably represented a large faction of the local Southeast Asian refugee population of the county at that time. County records indicate that about 90% of the refugee public assistance caseload in 1979-80 was Vietnamese. According to those records, secondary migration of other refugee groups into Fresno started occurring around April 1980. A dramatic increase in the refugee population of the county has been taking place since that time. Because the refugee population has changed so quickly, good figures are hard to come by. Two sources of

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[1]Probably a substantial underestimate due to the under-representation of a large pool of census-shy illegal aliens of Mexican nationality.

data offer fairly similar pictures of the rapid growth of Fresno's refugee population during this period: (1) the number of refugees receiving cash and/or medical assistance and (2) the number of school children other than Spanish speakers classified as LEP (limited English proficiency). Neither measure is perfect, or course, and each has its problems; by and large, however, the picture is clear enough.

Date	Number of Refugees on Aid (Fresno County DSS)
6/79	400
7/80	597
3/81	1,235
3/82	3,132
3/83	6,238

Date	Number of LEP Students in Fresno Unified School District (non-Spanish-speaking)
3/79	343
3/80	393
3/81	499
3/82	879
3/83	2,080

In both sets of statistics the same picture emerges: low levels of refugee impact through early 1981, accelerating growth during the next year, with a massive influx of refugees arriving between March 1982 and March 1983. By October 1982, the Fresno County Plan for the Delivery of Services to Refugees estimated about 8,700 refugees living in the county, composed as follows:

Hmong	6,500
Vietnamese	1,500
Cuban	300
Lao	200
Cambodians	116
European	60
African	45
Middle East	30

Estimates such as these vary widely, due to the high mobility of the refugee population and the "invisibility" of refugees who do not receive public assistance. Nevertheless it is clear that almost all of the recent growth of the local refugee population is due to an influx of secondary migrants, the vast majority of whom are Hmong. By October 1982, a county-sponsored refugee study (results are in the County Plan cited above) estimated that 80.5% of Fresno's refugees were secondary migrants: nearly one-third (30.3%) of the refugee residents were secondary migrants from other counties in California and over half (50.2%) from other states. Chief among these origins of secondary migrants are two of the other communities being studied: Nearly one-fourth (23%) of Fresno's refugees came from Oregon (vastly more than from any other state) and 16.4% came from Orange County (more than from any other California country).

This recent influx of Hmong secondary migrants into Fresno has continued to swell the numbers of Hmong. As of June, 1983, there are about 10,000 Hmong in Fresno, bringing the number of Indochinese living in Fresno County up to approximately 12,000, about 3% of the county population. Since most of these refugees reside in the City of Fresno, the level of impact in the city is closer to 5%. There is no indication that the rate of Hmong in-migration is slowing, and the impact level is likely to continue rising in the near future. Hmong leaders in Fresno are expecting continued growth of the local population through secondary migration.

D. Economic Base

Fresno is the center of the California (indeed, of the U.S.) agri-business economy. Fresno consistently has the highest agricultural output (total dollar value of all agricultural products) of any county in the United States, with adjoining counties usually #2 and #3 in the country. In 1982,

Fresno's agricultural output was valued at $1.9 billion: $1.6 billion from crops and $300 million in dairy and grazing outputs. The $1.6 billion worth of crops is produced on 1.3 million acres, for an average yield of $1,415/acre. A wide variety of fruits and vegetables, as well as cotton, cattle and dairy products, are produced commercially. Naturally, the dollar yield per acre varies widely with the particular crop (as do the production costs per acre); strawberries, for example, can yield as much as $25,000/acre.

Many of the crops require labor-intensive cultivation, creating a demand for cash field laborers. Naturally, there are major seasonal fluctuations in the agricultural labor force: In 1982, for example, agricultural employment varied from a low of 30,500 in December/January to a high of 114,700 in August/September. On an annualized basis, agriculture accounts for nearly one-quarter (24.2%) of all wage and salary jobs in the Fresno SMSA. Cash laborers, drawn from local Chicano, refugee and other groups, fill most of these jobs. Because of the seasonal fluctuations in climate and employment opportunities, there are large numbers of migrant workers moving in and out of Fresno throughout the agricultural cycle. Interestingly, some Hmong are joining the ranks of these migrant workers, migrating north from Fresno to Portland, during the hot summer months, to escape the heat and take advantage of the cooler climates and the demand for berry and vegetable pickers in Oregon.

Whereas the agricultural sector of Fresno's economy has been steadily growing in recent years despite the nationwide recession, other sectors have not fared well. Other industries are not healthy enough to absorb a large influx of unskilled labor such as the Hmong (not to mention the even larger numbers of Black and Hispanic laborers). The Chamber of Commerce is anticipating growth in several industries in the next several decades which

may expand local employment opportunities: "high tech" electronics, agriculture and food processing, plastics, corrugated paper products, and service industries.

E. Employment

As might be anticipated from the foregoing discussion, the employment situation in Fresno has been grim in recent years. Although the size of the labor force has grown, the unemployment rate has grown even more:

1980	1981	1982	1983
8.9%	10.5%	13.8%	15% (est.)

As elsewhere in the U.S., the unemployment rates for Blacks and those of Spanish origin are dramatically higher than for Whites: The 1980 Census reported 7.3% of the White labor force was unemployed, whereas 12.8% and 16.5% of the Black and Spanish-origin labor forces, respectively, were unemployed.

U.S. Census data indicate that Fresno is poorer than other areas of California. In 1979, the per capita income was $6,982, which is 84% of the statewide figure of $8,312, and 73% of Orange County's per capita income of $9,569. The median family income in Fresno (1979)--$18,399--was 85% of the statewide average. Perhaps more telling are the figures for the percentage of families below or near the official poverty line. In 1979, 14.5% and 20.5% of the families in Fresno had incomes placing them below the poverty line or below 125% of the poverty line, respectively (27% and 31% higher than the corresponding statewide figures).

The family incomes for minority groups lag well behind those of Whites in Fresno. In 1979, median family income for Whites was $20,091, whereas

families of Spanish origin had a median income of $13,061 and Black families had a median income of only $10,530. One can only guess how these results might be extrapolated to the Hmong and other refugee groups.

F. Welfare Benefits and Regulations

As in most locales, there is a complex set of fiscal and administrative relationships among the various governmental jurisdictions and agencies administering the welfare system in Fresno. In general, the cash and medical assistance programs available for refugees in Fresno are similar (although the payment schedules differ) to those in most counties of California, including Orange County. Since features of those programs have already been described in the Orange County Case Study Report, they need not be described again here. Payment schedules are generally equivalent among RCA, AFDC and AFDC-U (unemployed parents) programs, and range up to $248/month for a one-person family to $1,071/month for an eligible family of 10 or more persons. Individuals not eligible for these programs--single people, childless couples or couples with grown children, for example--find that the general assistance (GA) program benefits for which they may be eligible are very limited. Cash assistance on GA is only approximately $100/month per person and no medical benefits are provided (a particularly critical factor for elderly applicants). In addition, strict restrictions apply to the award of general assistance. For example, individuals must be work-eligible, which in effect eliminates older individuals from eligibility as well as limiting the number of hours younger individuals can attend school (since they must be available for work).

Although the payment levels are generally equivalent among all but the GA programs from the refugees' point of view, they are not at all equivalent from

the point of view of who finances the programs. Federal, state and county cost-sharing for cash and medical assistance programs varies radically with the refugee's family composition and length of residence in the U.S. The federal government reimburses the state and county for welfare costs for refugees eligible for the regular assistance programs up to 36 months after the refugee enters the U.S. As more refugees pass from being "time-eligible" to "time-expired" (for the cost of their services to be federally reimbursed), the county's share of the welfare costs may soon rise dramatically. In particular, the county carries the full cost of general assistance program benefits to refugees once they have been here over 36 months (unlike other program costs which are routinely shared by the county, state and federal government). In the words of a report prepared by the county interagency refugee task force, "this represents a ticking time bomb in terms of its potential for devastating Fresno County's treasury" (Fresno County's Challenge: Resettling Refugees. Report of the Interagency Refugee/ Legislative Task Force, November 19, 1982). Although there are few Hmong on GA at the present time, welfare officials feel that the county GA program in particular may soon be fiscally and politically vulnerable as increasing numbers of refugees become time-expired. The disastrous impact such a cut would have on local Hmong resettlement will be considered below.

G. Low-Income Housing

The 1980 Census data, which indicate a rental vacancy rate of 8% and a median rental cost of $199, suggest a relative abundance of low-cost rental housing. Indeed, Hmong in Orange County repeatedly identified the availability of low-cost housing in Fresno as a major attraction of the area (the corresponding Census figure in Orange County is $366).

Most Hmong in Fresno live in high density apartment complexes, often doubling and tripling up families to save rent and to open up units for relatives with very large families. As in other areas, a particular problem is the shortage of large apartments. Despite the rapid growth of Fresno's Hmong community, the low-cost housing supply apparently has not been exhausted, although some officials feel it may well be soon, particularly as the economy recovers and employment picks up.

H. Refugee Services Available

A variety of public and private agencies serve refugees in Fresno County. As elsewhere in California, the county is the fundamental administrative unit for delivery of publicly-funded services for refugees. In Fresno, the County Department of Social Services (DSS) oversees service planning and delivery, operating under a state mandated County Plan for the Delivery of Services to Refugees, approved by the County's Board of Supervisors. The range of services available to refugees in Fresno, described in the 1982 County Plan, is attached as Appendix B to this report. Several additional services were recently contracted for the six-month funding period beginning April 1, 1983: A total of $250,000 was awarded to the Economic Opportunity Council (EOC) for running the central intake unit and employment services; to Fresno Adult School for ESL, VESL, Vocational Training and Employment Services; to Nationality Services for health-accessing support services; and to Proteus for vocational training. The proposed working relationship among three of these agencies is diagrammed in Appendix C. Additional services are expected to be funded through Targeted Assistance monies, of which Fresno County anticipates receiving about $800,000.

The service priorities reflected in the current County Plan are responsive to the state's Budget Control Language, which mandates priority provision of "hard" services; the 1982 Plan allocates (for RFP purposes) the county's social service dollars as follows:

*Employment Services	45%
ESL	10%
Health Assessing Services	15%
Vocational ESL	0%
Vocational Training	20%
Social Adjustment Services	10%
Mental Health Services	0%
	100%

*includes funding of Central Intake Unit

Despite the concern for refugees and thoughtfulness that is generally apparent in the Plan, the state of the service delivery system in Fresno is not bright. There seem to be three inter-related problems: underfunding, lack of funding continuity and lack of coordination among service providers. Let's look at each of these briefly.

Underfunding. There just is not enough social service money for Fresno. In FFY 82, a meager $132,252 was allocated. Although the amount of social service funding has risen and will be supplemented by Targeted Assistance dollars, it is nevertheless inadequate to meet the needs of the large refugee population, mostly Hmong secondary migrants who are unemployed, on welfare, and lacking English and vocational skills. Indications of this severe underfunding are evident everywhere: Adult ESL students and teachers have to deal with extraordinarily large classes and not enough materials to go around; there is underutilization of existing services (particularly health-related services) because of a shortage of bilingual staff among the private and public service providers; and prior to April, there had been virtually no vocational training available for a refugee population, the vast majority of whom (as we will see) are unemployed and without job skills.

Although lack of funding is creating problems in refugee resettlement across the country, the problems are particularly acute in Fresno because allocation formulas for social service dollars generally do not fully consider the impact of secondary migration. The use of outmoded statistical data in these allocation formulas also serves to exacerbate Fresno's underfunding; the growth of the refugee population through secondary migration has continued to outstrip belated updates of the statistical figures used to allocate dollars. A comment from Fresno's Interagency Committee's report, Fresno County's Challenge: Resettling Refugees, describes this issue:

> Federal refugee social services dollars administered through ORR are apportioned to the States based on the State's number of refugees who have been in the country less than 36 months. In fact, States and counties feel considerable urgency to reduce welfare dependency of refugees who have been in the country longer. Admissions of new refugees into the country are much lower now than a few years ago. But thousands of refugees who were initially placed in other States have migrated to California in order to join relatives, take advantage of the more temperate climate, in hopes of finding employment, and in some cases, because of California's more generous welfare system. Many of the refugees now streaming into California are at or near the 36-month demarcation. Thus, they are not counted when federal social service dollars are apportioned to the States. Compounding the problem is the disagreement between California and federal officials on the total number of refugees in California. State officials say that there are more refugees on the welfare rolls in California than are in the federal estimate of the total number of refugees in California. Furthermore, there are an estimated 150,000 refugees in California receiving welfare, at the same time when the federal government is basing its allocation to California on a figure of 130,000 refugees, the number it estimates have been in the country for less than 36 months.

Lack of continuity. Because of the complex and time-consuming inter-departmental process of administration and funding at both federal and state levels, the direct service providers often do not have sufficient notification of available funding for refugee programs. This makes for obvious problems in planning and implementing ongoing service delivery.

Again, a quote from the Interagency report illustrates the problems experienced in Fresno:

> The Fresno County Department of Health has received an annual grant award for the Refugee Preventive Health Services Program since 1979. However, late notification by the federal government to the State regarding its annual allocation has made this a stop-and-go program. During FFY 1982, the Fresno County Program was in operation for only about seven months due to late notification. Despite the short time frame, the program staff did health screening for 145 primary refugees and 644 secondary migrants. Treatment was provided by the program to 493 refugees, and 456 were referred for treatment or services by other providers. Follow up and health education were offered also, to the extent that time permitted. Interpreter services were provided in 3,667 instances. This was accomplished by two Hmong and one Vietnamese full-time community health aides employed by the program. In addition, the interpreters' services were requested far more often than could be fulfilled by other service providers.
>
> Despite its effectiveness, this program had to cease operating on October 1, 1982, because, again, the federal government had not provided allocation instruction information to the State in time to keep the program going. Word has been received that Fresno County will be awarded approximately $30,000 for FFY 1983 for the program. However, in the meantime, the community health aides were terminated and services were disrupted. Several months will have been lost, and the program will have to go through unnecessary start-up activities again.

Lack of coordination. Workers in the myriad public and private agencies serving refugees in Fresno County seem to concur that refugee service provision is not yet effectively coordinated. Although there is a local Forum on Refugee Affairs, consisting of representatives of all private, non-profit and public agencies involved in refugee service delivery as well as representatives of the refugee groups, most individuals we talked with felt the Forum was useful only for information sharing and did not enhance service coordination. Part of the difficulty is well summarized in the Interagency Task Force report from which we have quoted before:

> It is virtually impossible to have a complete picture of the status of services to refugees in Fresno County because services are provided by a growing array of individuals, families, churches, businesses, private providers and public agencies.

> There is no one central spot where all of these interested parties intersect. As with the federal and state agencies, there is no one in charge here.

The County Plan acknowledges these difficulties as well:

> Despite the efforts of the FORUM, service delivery still remains fragmented. Each organization and agency targets in on those refugees coming to their attention. Services are provided to the best of their individual and sometimes collective ability. The establishment of a centralized referral and placement intake center is a primary need which is now lacking in the current process. It should be noted that a large number of these services are not readily available due to the fact that many refugees lack proficient language skills. The number of agency staff who are bilingual is inadequate and lack proficiency in technical areas, i.e., medical terminology, judicial and legal terminology, and mental health. Refugees do not utilize services because they are unaware the services exist, or because of artificial barriers and cultural differences.

It is hard to blame the Fresno service delivery network for these problems. None of the providers or agencies (could have) expected the massive refugee influx that has taken place in the last couple years. Most have been unprepared to gear up quickly and have had to scramble to utilize paltry resources effectively. In many respects, as its refugee population grows, the Fresno service network is going through the growing pains previously experienced by other highly impacted communities early in their development. As long as adequate resources are available, there is no reason that most of these service problems cannot be overcome.

I. Community Receptiveness to Refugees

Until recently, community reaction to the refugees has been in fairly low profile. Three years ago, there were relatively few refugees in the county, most of whom were relatively well educated and assimilated quickly. At that time, the local economy was much healthier than it is today. Since 1980, unemployment has nearly doubled, and the number of refugees in the county has multiplied by a factor of about five. Not surprisingly, negative reactions

towards Hmong and other refugees are increasing. In some people's minds, these recent arrivals on the Fresno scene are competing with others for low income housing, jobs, and other pieces of a "limited pie."

We talked to a wide variety of people about how the local community is receiving and reacting to their new residents. In general, several different views emerged, generally predictable by the vantage point from which the community reception is viewed. Knowledgeable service providers and others familiar with the local resettlement process report that the community, in general, has responded favorably. They report that although church groups and the private sector were slow to get involved at first, they are starting to come around. Observers do point out, however, that the once seemingly isolated incidents of violence against the Hmong are becoming more frequent. Racial tensions (between Mexicans and Hmong and between Blacks and Hmong) are increasing as well.

Item: During the first couple days of our visit to Fresno, two men kidnapped and raped a six-year-old Hmong girl. In two incidents, Blacks came into Hmong neighborhoods and randomly picked out two Hmong boys and beat them up, hospitalizing one with serious head injuries.

Item: Hmong are meeting and asking how to protect themselves (legally) against violence: Many feel the police won't protect them and are arming themselves.

According to one knowledgeable and sympathetic Volag official, "Chicanos, Blacks and other groups of Asians, who have been around here a long time, resent the special attention refugees are suddenly getting." One city official reported receiving "lots of calls from angry citizens" about the high welfare payments refugees reportedly receive; apparently, recent news articles reported some exaggerated cases and some involving seemingly extravagant benefit levels.

But another prominent city official felt that the community was exhibiting a "benign" response. This individual, however, indicated that he was referring to the response of the White, middle class of Fresno, who admittedly are in less contact and competition with refugees than are members of other minority groups. Members of these other groups, in informal conversation, were not reluctant to express feelings of resentment or even hostility towards the refugees: "We've been around here a lot longer, and no one's trying to help us."

The Hmong themselves are naturally reluctant to discuss such problems at first--they know full well the political (and economic) liabilities of appearing ungrateful to Americans. Once the conversation opens up, however, reports of the prejudice, discrimination, physical and psychological violence they routinely encounter comes quickly to the surface. A few remarks from the interviews and group meetings we conducted illustrate the phenomena:

> We have been beaten or robbed on the street, at work, at home, at school...by some minority Americans, and no legal action has been taken to stop this trouble.
>
> Many American people are not happy at all for us to come to their country. They don't understand why we are here, that we have no other alternatives.
>
> Most of the kids at school don't like Hmong.
>
> We are cheated by the local people, especially at the shopping center, gas station, labor bosses...
>
> It seems that Americans hate us.
>
> It was on September 15, 1982. I had an accident. When I was still waiting for the green light, a Mexican hit the rear of my car. We then called the police; when the police arrived, the officer was also Mexican. The officer had a long talk with the party who hit me, but it seems like the officer did not want to talk to me and paid no attention to what I tried to say. Finally, I could not get any money from the man who hit me, so I had to fix my car.

> Hmong feel shame when people complain about our life on welfare. We feel our American neighbors always reject us.
>
> I strongly believe that a police officer has done something unjust to me. A car hit me, a police officer came and acted like he was angry at me. After that, I went to see a lawyer. The lawyer said that I had a good reason to sue the party in court. I then went to get my accident report from the Police Department, but no report had been made for the case. There should be justice for our people in the law, too.
>
> Why do so many people in this country hate us? Why does everyone, from children to older people, put us down, spit on our heads, and consider us as a group of animals...How can we start a living in a land where so many people always reject us?

There is no reason to multiply such examples here. No doubt the Hmong are describing not only the actual abuses they suffer but the psychological shock at being mistreated and being unable to redress their grievances. Hmong are a proud people, and react strongly to perceived injustice. Although some of the incidents described may have been due in part to language problems and cultural differences, the number of such reports alone indicates a sizeable and growing problem in community relations.

But the Hmong are not the only group reporting such problems in Fresno, nor are reports of discrimination and crime against the Hmong limited to Fresno: These problems have been experienced in Hmong resettlement in many areas across the country. To gauge better the magnitude of local problems, we asked for a show of hands, as carefully as we could, in one large group meeting (attended by about 175 Hmong):

How many have been cheated in the store, gas station, ..., or in wages?	20-25%
How many have experienced or seen discrimination against Hmong?	75-80%
How many believe that the Hmong are being abused through being cheated or having violence committed against them?	90-95%
How many feel they have not been treated fairly by the police?	30-40%

These counts, of course, are not definitive and may well, in some cases, reflect not just respondents' personal experiences but their knowledge of others' experiences as well. Nonetheless, they do reflect one unmistakable reality: The Hmongs' perception of being negatively received by their American hosts. These perceptions and the negative feelings that go along with them, are as a critical part of the "resettlement context" as the climate, the local unemployment rate, and the services available.

The Hmong leaders present at this meeting, in urging their people to respond frankly to these queries, wanted one thing to remain clear:

> We are raising our hands regarding conditions here not in opposition to the American government or American leaders. But we are raising our hand to express dissatisfaction with the people who look down on us.
>
> We believe that the government will have more good wish for us. That's why it makes us willing to raise our real problem to the staff researchers. We hope something will be done about it in the future.

These are not idle complaints being aired. It is difficult to measure accurately the extent to which such problems may be more severe in Fresno than elsewhere, or whether people in Fresno perhaps are simply still hoping that something can be done to solve these problems, more willing to express them. In fairness to the many positive things seen in Fresno's Hmong resettlement and the many supportive and dedicated individuals serving Hmong in Fresno, this should remain an open question.

It is not so easy, however, to suspend judgment on the reception given to the Hmong by Fresno police. Language and cultural differences are often contexts for complaints about police indifference and misbehavior. But there have been far too many complaints made for the city and the police department to ignore. Even the claimed shortage of funding cannot justify not having <u>someone</u> working in the police department who speaks Hmong. In an attempt to

improve relations between Hmong and the police, Tony Vang, President of the Lao Family Association (the local Hmong MAA), has recently volunteered to do some inservice training to familiarize officers with Hmong culture and problems, and has made himself (and other community leaders) available for emergency translating around the clock: "They have my phone number on the wall above their desks."

Problem solved? Unfortunately not. Recall the incident in which two men kidnapped and raped a six-year-old Hmong girl. Naturally, the community was very upset about this incident, which received considerable media attention as well during our visit. A police spokesman discussed the case several times on local television news. He claimed that the police could not make much headway in their investigation because the little girl's family did not speak English and was from a different culture: They never called Tony Vang to ask for a translator!

II. LOCAL HMONG POPULATION

A. Size

It is difficult to determine accurately the number of Hmong in Fresno County because of the continuing high rate of in-migration and the "invisibility" of Hmong who are independent of the refugee service provision system. The consensus reached by examining school enrollment data, welfare caseloads, and estimates by community leaders (and using relationships determined elsewhere between Hmong school enrollment and population size) is that there were about 10,000 Hmong in Fresno as of May 1983.[2] Hmong leaders report an average of about three new families arriving per day, which should add approximately 500 additional Hmong per month, a rate expected to continue at least through the summer. This would boost the local population to about 12,000 by September.

B. History of Settlement

The Central Valley has long been an attractive area for Hmong to resettle, but it is only recently that significant numbers of Hmong have moved into Fresno and adjoining counties. Shortly after Hmong military leaders began arriving in the U.S. after the fall of the Royal Lao Government in 1975, the Fresno area was visited by a few key leaders as a prospective resettlement area. The possibility of farming was the key factor in the early

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[2]This figure is higher than the previously reported March 1983 welfare caseload figure of 5,351 for several reasons: (1) most but not all Hmong are on welfare; (2) many Hmong moved into Fresno in the first half of 1983; and (3) it often takes several months after a family moves for their welfare cases to be transferred administratively.

interest in the area. Nevertheless, for a variety of reasons, Hmong leaders decided against agricultural initiatives in Fresno at that time. Reasons mentioned included the high capital costs of land and equipment relative to expected yields and Hmong unfamiliarity with modern agricultural technology.

But during the late 1970s, a few families did move into the area and operated small farms. Word of their "success" spread quickly throughout the Hmong communities being established elsewhere as the massive influx of Hmong came into the U.S. during 1980 and 1981. A few Hmong started migrating into Fresno from other areas (chiefly Orange County and San Diego) during this period, attracted by reports of the relatively low cost of living and the feasibility of farming.

Thereafter, Hmong "secondary migrants" began streaming into Fresno (and nearby Merced) in a fairly continuous manner. Whereas most of the early settlers were drawn to Fresno by the prospects of farming, the later arrivals had a variety of motivations for moving to Fresno. Some continued to come because of farming (even though relatively few families had been able to support themselves through farming and many had failed, the good news seems to have traveled faster and farther); others were drawn by the warmer climate of California (particularly Hmong living in Minnesota and the Midwest); others were attracted by the more generous eligibility requirements and benefit schedules of California's welfare system (particularly Hmong in Oregon and other states where the combination of high unemployment and the unavailability of public assistance for two-parent, unemployed households left families with few economic options); still others came to Fresno from other areas because of the availability of ESL programs here but not in some other states (particularly Texas and Utah); and as the size of the Fresno community steadily grew, many migrated simply for family reunification.

This picture of Hmong settlement in Fresno is borne out by welfare caseload statistics: There were no Hmong receiving public assistance in Fresno County in June 1979. A year later, in July 1980, records indicate a total of 168 Hmong individuals on aid (only four of whom were time-expired); according to local officials, the Hmong started migrating from Southern California in April 1980, but they did not begin showing up in the caseload data until three months later, after their cases had been administratively transferred from welfare offices in sites of primary resettlement. By March 1981, the Hmong caseload consisted of 1,066 individuals. Rapid growth is evident thereafter. Here are the Fresno County Hmong caseloads over time:

Date	Number of Hmong Individuals on Aid
6/79	0
7/80	168
3/81	1,106
3/82	2,192
3/83	5,341

By June of 1983, welfare officials estimate the actual Hmong caseload size will be about 7,000 (although many will not show up in caseload counts until 1-3 months later due to delays in administrative transfer).

As noted earlier, almost all of this growth can be attributed to secondary migration. Welfare statistics indicate about a 60-40 mix of interstate and intrastate transfers into Fresno. Oregon has been the largest source of interstate secondary migrants, and Orange County the largest source of intrastate migrants. The group meetings held in Fresno confirm this general picture: About 90% are secondary migrants (123/137 polled in six group meetings). Although a wide variety of states are represented, most came from Oregon and many from Orange County.

Some sample remarks, translated from interviews in Hmong with individual families and from group meetings[3], illustrate the variety of motivations for moving to Fresno.

> I and my group left Portland. Several of the group were working. We came directly from Thailand and got jobs right away. We worked for three or four years and made $3.50-$4.00/hour. Whenever it came time to give one of us a raise, they laid us off. We could not bear the thought of being used like temporary workers this way, so we looked for new opportunities, to do better, and so we moved.
>
> I moved here for many reasons:
>
> > It is so cold in St. Paul, Minnesota, it made my family sick. And in the cold climate we could not do anything. Everyone lived like prisoners in jail.
> >
> > We could not find jobs for non-English speakers in Minnesota. All of us Hmong were on welfare. We heard that down here, it is easier to get a job or create our own employment as farmers.
> >
> > We came here, because my relative who could help me with all matters in my family lived here.
>
> There are nine members in my family. When I first came, welfare was about $600 a month. Working for a company, I earned $4 an hour. So I earn $600 or so per month at work. Of the nine people, two reached 18 and wanted to work. I put my wife's name and my son's name in to work at the company, but they never hired them. I couldn't support my family. I moved to California.
>
> There were not refugee programs available everywhere for the Hmong. For example: 10 to 20 families settled in Utah, where there was no school or ESL programs for them. When they first arrived, their sponsors found them jobs, but later employers laid them off. No one else could find them a job or find schools where they could learn English. Because the government offered programs where many Hmong lived together, everyone keeps coming to those areas no matter how difficult living there <u>is</u>.
>
> I went to look for a job in the city of San Diego for nine months and could not find a job. Then I decided to move to Portland, Oregon. I had been working there for two years, but my family was so big that I could not support them enough. I

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[3]Some individuals in our largest group meeting (over 150 individuals) who did not have a chance to talk sent letters to staff about their experiences (translations are in Appendix F).

applied to welfare for additional assistance, such as more money and medical care, but they could not help me either...As a result, I decided to quit working and moved to Fresno for more English training. When I speak the language better I will try to look for another job.

In 1978, I arrived in America settling in the state of Utah, in the city of Fillmore. There was no program there to assist me at all. No house to live in. I had to stay with relatives. I have worked for two years in Utah. I had a very difficult time facing the language problem. I could not speak English and did not know where to go. I decided to move to the city of Fresno, California, hoping that an English class could help my family improve our language and secure a better future in America.

Since I came to this country in 1979, I have lived in Nashville, Tennessee. They didn't have any cash assistance program to help my family, not even a school program that helps adults to learn English. So I just worked and never learned English.

People came here (to Fresno) to see if they could work on the farm. But we arrived here with very little money, and the welfare regulations discouraged us from even trying. We only go to school and see and wait.

Several interesting points are illustrated in these examples. First, in addition to those who moved for immediate economic betterment (i.e., to avail themselves of public assistance), others moved in order to access English or vocational training in <u>hope</u> of a better future for themselves and their families. <u>Hope</u> for the future seems to be an essential ingredient in Hmong resettlement. Individuals, even some who were working, traded jobs or employment opportunities for access to English language or vocational training. California not only offers refugees virtually unlimited access to ESL, in many places ESL participation is tacitly encouraged. Consider this example:

Dang is an unemployed male in his late 40's, with a family of eight. He came to the U.S. in 1976, and settled in Texas. He stayed there until 1979, working in a series of five jobs, starting two months after he arrived. Most of these jobs were part-time: First, he did yard work; then he worked in a couple restaurants; then in a warehouse; and finally in a factory (he operated a machine producing electrical wire). Dang quit his last job and moved to California because he had no ESL program or job training program for him in Texas. He says he needs hope for a better future.

A second point illustrated in these examples is that many of the individuals based their decision to move to Fresno on false information. Many people, attracted to the idea of farming, came to Fresno only to discover that there were more failures than successes, that capital was needed to get started, and marketing was very problematic. Others came not for the chance to farm, but for the training programs and jobs they heard about in California. Apparently, they had heard about the training programs in Orange County and the once abundant supply of jobs there. But they found neither vocational training nor jobs in Fresno. Another example:

> Tau is a 30-year-old man, head of a family of five. He came to the U.S. in 1978, and settled in St. Paul. He wanted to be an electronic technician. He took some basic electronics training in Minnesota and completed the program. But he couldn't find a job in this field. He heard that California has plenty of jobs in electronics, one of his reasons for moving. His other reasons for moving to Fresno were (1) better climate; (2) all his relatives moved to Fresno; and (3) opportunity for more training and education. But, he points out, 'I came to the wrong location. Because in Fresno, there is no job.'

C. Employment

With high unemployment in the general population (15-18% at present), there are few employment opportunities for Hmong in the Fresno area. Knowledgeable leaders estimate that about 25% of the Hmong in Fresno are "financially independent" of public assistance. This group includes working families as well as those who are both unemployed and ineligible for public assistance (and who must be supported by others). The exact mixture of these types is not known.

Our data suggest that the Hmong employment rate is very low indeed. The consensus of the Hmong informants was that 5-10% of Hmong adults are employed. They report that most who are working are in social services (i.e., bilinguals) or farming or factory labor. In the group meetings, only two of

over 100 men reported being currently employed in salaried jobs: one as a full-time auto mechanic (making $4.50 an hour with medical benefits for himself but not his family), another working part-time as a bilingual tutor in the schools (earning $4.15 an hour with no benefits). Similarly, none of the eight individuals interviewed was working in a salaried job. At the same time, about 20% of the participants in the group meetings and five of the eight individuals interviewed reported working elsewhere in the United States.

The low rates of employment and labor force participation reflect a number of things: (1) the dearth of available jobs in Fresno for anyone, particularly Hmong; (2) the disincentives to work, examined below, represented by welfare regulations; and (3) the possibility that some individuals may be "invisible" workers, generating income in the agricultural sector, either through seasonal labor in the fields or self-employment in vegetable farming. When asked how most people find work in Fresno, our informants responded "on their own"; some indicated that EDD also helps a little.

An employment service counselor for the Economic Development Department (EDD) indicated that although "a few" Hmong have been placed in factory jobs and janitorial services,

> the job market for Hmong in Fresno does not look good. Hmong are used to manual work--Fresno has very few industries--a few small electronic assembly companies which hire Mexicans and other minority groups are not opening their doors to newcomers. Perhaps when the U.S. economy becomes better, the Hmong will have an opportunity to be hired.

The biggest problem faced by the Hmong seeking employment, all parties agree, is their lack of English skills. The service industry in Fresno does have openings from time to time, but few Hmong have the requisite language or job skills according to the counselor. Nor have there been any job training programs available locally; the counselor went on to note, "however, because

the job market is not good, a person will not get a job after training."

But many Hmong do find intermittent, seasonal farming jobs. EDD has placed about 350 people in these jobs during 1982 and hopes to place more this year. Earnings in these jobs are generally determined on a piece-rate basis and are difficult to measure. Individuals rarely make more than $20 per day and during the hot summer months the work is oppressive.

Farming. A sizeable number of families are self-employed in farming, generally renting land, buying seeds, supplies and water, raising vegetables (sugar peas, cherry tomatoes, chiles) and for the first time this year, some are trying the more expensive but potentially lucrative strawberries. Individual Hmong farmers are quite understandably reluctant to expose their activities, fearing that they might lose their eligibility for cash and medical assistance while having no guarantee of a successful harvest. In some cases eligibility might be lost, in others it might not (we will discuss this further below); in any event, a few farmers did lose benefits last year, and everyone is being cautious this year. In one group meeting, for example, people were reluctant at first to mention their farming, even though the entire group was farming.

A very knowledgeable informant with a good grasp on the extent of Hmong farming in the Fresno area reports: 650-700 acres are being farmed by 200-250 independent farmers, most starting with two to three acres. Two typical farmers we visited:

> M., a man in his mid-thirties, has been farming for two years in Fresno. He made pretty good money last year, starting without any help (and his family's money), growing two acres of sugar peas. This year he is investing earnings from last year and is raising 2.3 acres of sugar peas (for which he had to invest $2,000) and 2.7 acres of strawberries, for which he invested $7,000. Noting that he already has a sales contract for his strawberries (but not for the sugar peas), he proudly points out he is the first Hmong strawberry farmer. His wife and young children work with him everyday on their farm, commuting about 10 miles from town.

T., has a farm not too far from M.'s farm. He is also growing strawberries for the first time this year, and he is a lucky one: He is working nine acres loaned to him by a company, who is also lending him capital for the operation. He will repay these loans directly out of the proceeds from selling strawberries. T., with $500 of his family's 'own money'. is also trying out one-half acre of cherry tomatoes as an experiment this year. He is thinking ahead to 'next year's business.'

We will have more to say about these and other farming operations in the "Issues" section below.

D. Welfare Dependence

Hmong leaders estimate that about 75% of Fresno's 10,000 Hmong are at least partially dependent on public assistance. Clearly not all of those receiving aid are unemployed or receive the maximum cash payments allowed. Unfortunately, the rapid growth of the Hmong community through secondary migration has prevented the collection of demographic information about the characteristics of Hmong recipients and non-recipients. But a recent caseload sample study conducted by the County indicated that about 95% of the Hmong cases are in the AFDC-U program, most are secondary migrants, and cases are being transferred from time-eligible to time-expired at about the same rate as new time-eligible cases are migrating in. More will be said in III-B below about welfare dependence.

III. RESETTLEMENT ISSUES

A. Employment

Employment is a thorny problem in Fresno. Hmong leaders, welfare and employment service workers, and the Hmong men and women themselves, lament the shortage of jobs for which Hmong qualify. Those that do manage to secure employment (other than the minority of educated bilinguals) rarely keep their jobs very long. There are several barriers to Hmong employment in Fresno: lack of English capability, lack of job skills, discrimination, welfare disincentives, lack of job search skills, and the lack of entrepreneurial experience and technical assistance for farmers and small businessmen. Let us consider each of these briefly in turn.

Lack of English capability. There has been an intense debate among refugee resettlement personnel across the country regarding how important English capabilities are for achieving employment for groups such as the Hmong. Although it may be an arguable matter in some economic environments, there is a clear consensus in Fresno among employment service workers, community leaders and the Hmong: English is critical for securing stable employment. Although many part-time farm workers and self-employed farmers do get by without command of English, almost all other available jobs in the area require English skills which most Hmong do not have. An employment service counselor put it this way:

> Actually, there are jobs out there, but Hmong are not qualified. Schools, hospitals, private clinics and other related service jobs for Hmong are available from time to time but Hmong do not have enough language skills to be qualified...Hmong need English and job training.

Hmong repeatedly mention their lack of English as a barrier to employment. Lack of appropriate job skills is also widely reported as a barrier to employment, and many Hmong feel they need both English language and vocational training. In some of the group meetings, we asked individuals to prioritize between language training and job training (since there might not be enough money for both): Which would help them more to find employment? In every case, the consensus was English language training. Given the frequency of reports we heard about (1) individuals who completed vocational training elsewhere who could not find work and (2) individuals who had jobs but eventually were laid off "because of language problems," the Hmong's priority in this matter was not surprising at all.

At the same time, it must be pointed out that identifying ESL itself as the remedy for individuals' "language problems" may not be realistic in many cases. We will see below that many Hmong do not feel that the hundreds of hours spent in ESL programs benefit their English capabilities (see English/ESL issue section below). There seem to be two aspects to this dilemma. First, improved approaches (including but not necessarily limited to better classroom instruction) to promoting the adults' English acquisition are clearly needed. Second, part of the Hmong's English "problem" may be their negative expectations about being able to master the language; such attitudinal factors are well known to inhibit second language learning. The combination of <u>perceiving</u> English as nearly impossible to learn on one hand and lack of fluency as an insurmountable barrier to suitable employment on the other hand seems to have a particularly devastating impact on some Hmong's self-confidence. Lack of ability to learn English seems to have become, in effect, a socially acceptable rationalization for many other genuine obstacles the Hmong face in seeking employment (lack of education, job skills,

discrimination, etc.). No doubt this happens because many Hmong naturally are not familiar with the American economic and employment system, and cannot recognize (or readily communicate to Americans) the many other problems they face in accessing the job market. One young man, for example, spoke up (in Hmong) at a group meeting, explaining in detail how his lack of English skills kept him from finding a job as an auto mechanic--we knew this young man in another context: He had once worked as an interpreter for us, and had near fluent command of the language!

It is very important to make this point clearly. We are <u>not</u> suggesting that Hmong consciously use lack of English as an excuse for avoiding work. We are suggesting that a lack of cultural knowledge about the workplace tends to reinforce certain categories of explanation about employers' reasons for not hiring or for laying off Hmong; and these categories are related to lack of English proficiency.

<u>Lack of appropriate job skills</u>. Although 10-15% of Hmong men seem to have received some kind of job training prior to coming to Fresno (mostly in electronics, carpentry, welding and machine shop), hardly any of them have been able to use those skills in the workplace (either in the location from which they came or in Fresno). As noted above, few of these skills are in demand in the Fresno labor market.

<u>Discrimination</u>. Hmong individuals generally feel victimized by discrimination in Fresno in many contexts including employment. The Hmong note incidents in which members of other minority groups are hired when Hmong are just as qualified, and that when Hmong do get a job and stay on long enough to be eligible for a raise, they are the first ones laid off. Specific incidents of discrimination in hiring, lay offs, or promotions are difficult

to verify, but most knowledgeable observers agree this is happening to a certain extent. We will have more to say about these and other welfare-related issues below.

Lack of job search skills. Many Hmong noted how much their lack of English language and/or literacy skills hinders their ability to look for work. A particular problem is not being able to fill out job applications. Neither the EDD nor the ESL programs teach these or related job-search skills. As with poor language skills, lack of basic knowledge and search skills pertinent to the world of work not only restricts individuals' job opportunities, it severely undermines their self-confidence and lowers their tolerance for frustration. These matters are aggravated even further by the lack of bilingual personnel in the EDD. Due to funding shortages, they have only one Hmong interpreter, who was just recently hired. Hopefully two more will be hired in the future, according to a department spokesman who stated: "When Hmong come to look for jobs, we have to call around for interpreters."

Need for bilingual foremen or supervisors. Several people suggested that if bilingual Hmong could be hired in large companies, the language barriers could be overcome; interpretation and supervision would be available on the spot, and bilingual OJT would be possible.

Before turning to a somewhat different set of employment issues, those facing Hmong farmers, let us consider a perhaps typical Hmong family's experience in the labor market which illustrates many of the foregoing issues and the reason so many came to Fresno in search of a better life. Consider the following example, translated from an interview with a 51-year-old man and his 47-year-old wife who recently had moved to Fresno:

I and my wife came directly from Thailand (refugee camp) to Utah on June 6, 1979, sponsored by an American family. We both are illiterate in our language, because we did not have the chance to learn at all.

Only a week after we arrived in Utah, our sponsor found us employment picking and sorting mushrooms. We received about $250 each week per person. The wage was based upon the number of containers of mushrooms that we picked. We both hoped that the job would help us to build a new life in the United States as we had dreamed. We advised each other frequently to work hard and be patient and to avoid all trouble.

We worked for the company for three years and four months and had no problems. One day in the month of November 1982, the employer complained that my wife had done a container of mushrooms that was improperly sorted. The employer then told my wife to go home right away. My wife was crying and begged to stay, to work, but the employer told her that she had to go home and the employer will let her know when she will come back to work.

Later on that day, the company fired both me and my wife. We asked and cried to stay on the job, but there was no consideration given. The company also gave us a bad check for our severence pay which we could not cash. Since we had been laid off and had no income, we went to welfare, but welfare referred us to the EDD to apply for unemployment benefits. We went there to apply for it, but the employer informed EDD that we had quit the job voluntarily, so the EDD denied our application.

A hearing was set up twice by the EDD, but we do not know how to deal with such things, and also we thought we should not fight against the government no matter if we are right or wrong, because we lost our country and should always respect those who are helping us now. To give us benefits or not is up to them.

Losing this job brought us great misfortune. Now we must go to welfare for help. We are eligible for cash and food stamps, but the caseworker said that we are not eligible for medical assistance, because we are too old.

Since my wife and I were laid off from our jobs in Utah, we have been seeking work in any unskilled position that does not require more than limited knowledge of the English language.

Farming. There are many barriers to Hmong farming in the Fresno area. Hmong informants estimate that as many as half the families who moved to Fresno came with the idea of farming. After they have spent some time in Fresno, relatively few retain interest in farming because of the formidable

barriers. Although stories of successful Hmong farms spread far and wide, in truth there have probably been more financial failures than successes; despite the many problems encountered, which will be detailed below, a strong desire for self-sufficiency impels many to try anyway.

Many of the barriers Hmong farmers face are the same that face any small farmer starting out in Fresno: the need for capital to buy or lease farmland, to purchase seed, fertilizer, irrigation equipment and water, and so forth. Although the yields, as described before, can be quite high, so are the investments required and the risks involved. For the Hmong, as for any poor people, additional burdens are imposed by the investment requirements and the inherent risks in agriculture. The Hmong's lack of familiarity with modern farming technology, the requirements of large scale marketing upon which the sale of their crops depends, and their lack of English fluency (which limits their access to existing outlets for agriculture information and technical assistance) pose additional problems and constraints on their farming. Let us look at each of these issues.

Investment requirements. Considerable capital is needed for any agricultural venture. Depending upon the crop, investment costs vary from several hundred to several thousand dollars per acre (just leasing, not buying the land) per year. Hmong wisely have taken advantage of their two chief resources to minimize the burden of such investments: a large supply of inexpensive, hard-working labor (i.e., extended family members) and their ability to pool resources among members of their natural groups. By growing labor-intensive rather than capital-intensive crops (e.g., row crops, Chinese vegetables), farmers should be able to leverage their limited capital further, by getting commercial companies to put up the front money and/or land as part of a sales contract. The reputation of the Hmong as reliable, industrious

workers will advance such arrangements; the case of the strawberry farmer described earlier illustrates the potential of such arrangements. Many farmers and prospective farmers (now on welfare) said that programs providing assistance to finance the start-up of small farm operations (in the form of loans against future sales) would help many farmers get started who cannot otherwise capitalize their operations.

Risk taking: Welfare disincentives. Poor people generally are risk averse, and the Hmong are no exception. Small businesses, including farming, entail many risks. For farming, the hazards of weather, disease, unpredictable crop markets and prices represent significant risks for the Hmong entrepreneur. These risk factors are multiplied, of course, by their unfamiliarity with modern agricultural techniques, equipment and marketing. In addition, welfare regulations impose a monumental burden on the small Hmong farmer and family: Farmers on welfare lose cash and medical benefits as soon as they go into business for themselves. If the designated primary wage earner (usually the husband) works on someone else's farm (e.g., a friend's or relative's), his or her welfare eligibility becomes subject to the 100 hour limitation (even if no wages are paid during that time period). Since income from farming generally does not appear until after harvest, the loss of cash and medical benefits during the long pre-harvest period is usually financially impossible or too risky at best for Hmong families. Many more Hmong would try farming if more flexible welfare policies were in effect; the total (rather than graduated) loss of benefits prevents many families from taking the very step that might lead to self-sufficiency within a fairly short period of time. It is one of the biggest complaints heard in Fresno.

Lack of familiarity with modern farming technology: Need for bilingual technical assistance. The agricultural technology deployed by the Hmong in

the highlands of Laos bears no similarity to that which is required for commerical purposes in the United States. Machinery, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, irrigation, and marketing were largely unheard of. The crops were different. The land was different. The seasonal cycle was different. The Hmong, realizing this soon after starting to farm, have achieved an historically unprecedented rate of development in agricultural technology. Numerous groups have bought tractors; plastic pipes (PCVs) can be seen irrigating Hmong fields; farmers can be seen mixing fertilizers and insecticides and applying them to their crops. Were it not for the costs and risks entailed, the hit-or-miss spirit in which many of these innovations are tried would no doubt lead to successful farming within a relatively short period of time.

But the costs and risks are great, and the commercial outcomes have been very mixed. The Hmong farmers cannot afford even a few unsuccessful years as a learning period. One big problem, of course, is lack of the needed technical expertise. The farmers understand the general need for water management, fertilizers and sprays, for example, after the requirements are explained to them, but they cannot read the specific instructions for diluting and mixing them: A formula for disaster which has been replicated too many times. Technical assistance is available through the County Farm and Home Advisor, a helpful and concerned specialist who really wants to see the Hmong farmers succeed in Fresno. But he cannot communicate with most of the farmers in a sufficiently technical way, and does not have any bilingual staff to assist him. Everyone we talked with--Hmong and American farmers, farm advisors, Hmong community leaders, prospective Hmong farmers, employment service counselors--agreed on the importance of providing on-call bilingual technical assistance to Hmong farmers. The County Farm Advisor wanted to hire

one bilingual Hmong person who already has advanced training in agriculture, himself a successful farmer in Fresno, to serve in this role. Unfortunately, the same old story: no funds available.

Part of the new DSS-sponsored training program will teach farming techniques to some Hmong, expanding the agricultural expertise present in the community. This is not expected, however, to fill the need for traveling, on-call bilingual technical assistance.

Marketing: The need for organization and commercial expertise. The biggest problem encountered by the Hmong farmers to date has been in marketing their crops. Many farmers tell stories of crops like tomatoes and snow peas just sitting around in boxes, waiting to be sold, eventually rotting because they could not be sold. Others report that they were "cheated," paid half the price others got for the same crop. Many are concerned the same things may happen again. Few farmers understand why they have trouble getting their produce to market or why prices vary so dramatically from week to week, month to month.

Hmong leaders have made many attempts to improve the marketing. They have made trips to the big wholesale markets in Los Angeles and San Francisco; they have tried to work with local packing houses and major distributors; they have tried to set up a Hmong farmer's cooperative. To date, none of these efforts has solved the marketing problems, although much has been learned.

Los Angeles distributors say that Hmong farmers really should not have any trouble with row crops like Japanese eggplants, pole beans, etc. Fresno is the best place in the country to grow them, and they are all labor-intensive, favoring the Hmong. Nevertheless, Hmong leaders who have approached the distributors report they are very leary of the Hmong produce because of its lack of uniform production and quality. Hmong farmers were advised to

coordinate operations, to stagger their plantings and harvests to maintain both steady production and quality; otherwise it is not cost effective for distributors to contract with individual Hmong farmers.

The same kinds of problems emerged last year working with a local packing company after contacts were established by the county agricultural extension at the request of Hmong leaders. The conclusion Hmong leaders drew from these experiences is that the farmers need to form a cooperative to facilitate marketing their produce. The leaders have tried very hard to form such a collective and a fledgling organization is slowly developing. The biggest problem encountered so far in organizing the co-op has been internal to the Hmong community: Hmong are not accustomed, and are therefore very reluctant, to share resources across traditional kin-based groups. According to one leader, the needed start-up money for staff, storage facilities and other fixed costs has been hard to raise from membership dues for this reason. "People don't want to contribute money until after they see benefits coming out of the co-op." Hmong leadersip is therefore soliciting external funding from several sources to facilitate starting the farmers's co-op. No funding has yet been received.

Not everyone is convinced that such a farmer's co-op will be helpful. In addition to skepticism on the part of some Hmong farmers, the County Farm and Home Advisor is very doubtful. He headed a large federally-funded marketing co-op of local small farmers, called NAFCA, two years ago, which folded after a year's operation and the infusion of $1 million of government funding. The biggest problems were maintaining an even supply and quality of crops and the farmers' cooperation.

The farm advisor feels it would be better for farmers to develop working relationships with local packing companies, getting sales contracts and

advances when possible to finance operations (recall the example of the strawberry farmer described in Chapter II). Another idea worth considering is a farmers' buying cooperative rather than a selling cooperative. With no added risks, the farmers could achieve considerable discounts on supplies and materials (poles, fertilizer, seed, etc.) through their group purchasing power. Hmong leaders felt this might be a useful idea and many farmers might be willing to contribute the savings they realize through discounted purchases to subsidize other co-op operations, such as hiring a marketing consultant, a bilingual farm advisor, etc.

Other ideas the farmers have considered involve trying to work with the Nisei farmers in the valley, who for several decades have been growing specialty crops (such as Chinese vegetables) for several decades. According to local informants, the Japanese farmers have the markets for these crops, which are highly labor-intensive, "sewn up" in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Contacts have been made, and some meetings held, but little tangible progress has been made to date. Each group has something to offer the other. The Japanese farmers, with their marketing contacts and expertise, are clearly in a position to help the Hmong. At the same time, since the children and grandchildren of the original Japanese farmers are increasingly leaving the farms in search of other opportunities, this source of inexpensive labor has dwindled. That, of course, is where the Hmong might fit in. At one meeting between some Nisei and Hmong farmers, jobs were offered on that basis to Hmong to work as farm laborers; unfortuately, the Hmong had come to the meeting for assistance to improve their own farms. Both sides left the meeting somewhat soured at the other. But there may still be room for progress; we suggest that some kind of marketing partnership could be a mutually beneficial arrangement at present.

Prognosis for farming. No doubt the marketing problem is not going to be easily solved. Nevertheless, removing some of the other barriers to Hmong farming--such as adding flexibility to some of the needlessly rigid welfare regulations, providing incentives to packing houses to contract with Hmong growers, guaranteeing loans to small Hmong farmers, or subsidizing bilingual farm training and technical assistance programs--all of these things are likely to increase Hmong farming and reduce their welfare dependence. It is certainly not the case that all Hmong want to farm in Fresno. But perhaps half of those who originally came to Fresno would consider farming as an alternative to welfare if the barriers were lowered. Our group meetings indicate that at present only 20% have an interest in farming in the future if existing barriers remain in place.

B. Welfare Dependence

There are several critical resettlement issues closely tied to welfare dependence in Fresno: Hmong attitudes; special groups with unmet needs; disincentives to employment; and disincentives to education. Let's look briefly at each in turn.

Hmong attitudes. There are strong welfare disincentives to Hmong employment in Fresno, similar to those described in the Orange County case study report, but perhaps even more severe in Fresno. About 95% of the Hmong caseload is AFDC-U, receiving cash assistance, medical assistance and food stamps, the amounts of which vary with the family's resources, income, and number of eligible dependents. A family of six, for example, can receive up to $771 per month in cash assistance, plus medical benefits and up to $360 in food stamps. There are very few jobs indeed available for Hmong in Fresno which would provide comparable income and benefits. The typical job pays no

more than $4/hour, and includes medical benefits, if any at all, for the worker only. The disparities between earnable income and welfare grow still larger as the family size increases ($1,071/month is the maximum cash payment).

Clearly, there is a tremendous disincentive for one member of an AFDC-U family to enter the workplace. If both husband and wife were to find jobs at the same time, and those jobs provided medical benefits for the children, and suitable childcare arrangements could be made, most families we talked to would jump at the opportunity to get off welfare, even if there would be some loss of total income. But the chance of this happening in the current Fresno economy is very small indeed by all accounts (and this is why we suggested that disincentives may be even stronger here than in Orange County).

Given equivalent income and benefits, almost all of the Hmong, according to our informants, our group meetings, and the individuals with whom we spoke, would prefer work over welfare. Some even suggested that they would work for less cash as long as food and medical care for their children was provided. As in other areas we visited (particularly Orange County), Hmong cannot understand why welfare does not provide enough supplementation (as it once did) to those working to provide them with an opportunity to work, gain experience and skills, and eventually qualify for raises which could take them off of welfare.

> Those who are on welfare will never have a chance to do anything to support themselves, because the system does not allow them to work and get a part of income to support the large family and qualify to get a part from the welfare.
>
> After regulations change (the 30 plus one-third rule), there is a big impact for all Hmong people. Many have to quit their jobs and come back to welfare. To help and keep people working, the government must supplement income for those who cannot earn enough to support their family.

> It (welfare) is a good program because it can help all the poor people when they can't help themselves. It is a bad program because it will keep everyone who depends on the program on the poverty line forever.

Special groups with unmet needs. Particular concern was repeatedly expressed about two age groups, those over 18 who are single or childless couples and those in the 50-60 age range whose children are grown. Neither group typically qualifies for aid other than general relief, for which payments are too low and restrictions on activities too high for "survival;" these individuals must depend on others, often their family members, themselves ill-equipped to assume the additional burden. Parents worry that their teenaged children, once they turn eighteen, will not be able to continue their education, thus dimming their own hopes and the perceived futures of the Hmong in America.

Disincentives to employment. "Dependence" seems an inappropriately loaded term to apply in the Fresno context, suggesting an alternative exists of which the Hmong are not availing themselves. By and large, Hmong leaders, groups and individuals we spoke with expressed a strong desire to "get off" of welfare, to become self-sufficient as they were in Laos, to join the American workforce. A few representative views on the welfare system:

> Welfare is no good for the long run, but it's good for the short term. My intention was to get an education, to get off welfare and not have to go back on it.

> I have to apply for welfare to feed my family. Being on welfare is not something that I like either. It is a necessity only and I even feel guilty. Sir! You know which way you want me to walk on, other than being on welfare; you know a better way to cope with life in this country, anything at all to improve my new life in America. I want to follow and be like Americans. Thanks.

> I understand that welfare money comes from all American taxpayers. I don't want to depend on it too long.

> Welfare has no alternative. There are no jobs, nothing else, it's the only thing we can depend on, but we don't like to.
>
> For two years, I just received welfare. Thinking about the future, I always have a headache.
>
> I want assistance from welfare because I want an education if I ever want to get a job. Life in this country is very hard to support myself. After I get an education, I can work. I never thought about being on welfare forever.
>
> Even if I don't know English, I will work where the employer is willing to use sign language. I am willing to work.
>
> We had depended on welfare for the past 4-5 years. Enough people have complained about it, but we could not get out of it. Because no other alternative exists.

The welfare disincentives to self-employed farming have been discussed above in Section III-A.

Disincentives to education. We have already noted how statewide regulations putting an 18-year-old age cap on high school education negatively impacts Hmong adolescents, particularly those who came to this country in their teens with little previous schooling. Welfare regulations further restrict what to many seems to be already an almost hopeless situation for these youngsters: They are no longer included in their families AFDC/AFDC-U grants after reaching 18; although they may be eligible for reduced benefits under the GA program, its "work eligible" regulations effectively prevent or seriously retard further schooling. The problems this causes for the adolescents and for the long-term resettlement of the Hmong as a whole were eloquently expressed in a large group meeting by a 19-year-old man:

> Ladies and gentlemen, I think the problems of the old people are an unsolved problem. I think that the key to solve their problems either in the short or long range is the younger generation like myself. Because the young people are those who had some education background so they are the advance people who can build the ability for self-sufficiency quicker. Example: Old people who came in 1976 started to learn ESL; until today they still cannot speak and go around themself, but for those young who are fortunate to continue

their education and go to college, already they have their college degree. Now a few of these young are those who run back and forth to deal with the community problems.

With the Government system today, the young people have no opportunity for anything at all. No one pays attention to this young generation. Welfare rates increase, because the young people have no opportunity so they get married too young and have children.

Today people like me do not qualify for any assistance--we cannot find a job, we don't have a place to live, what to eat. We cannot afford our school expenses, we dropout of school. Get married, have children, go back to qualify for AFDC. That's all everyone does today.

Please think about it.

C. Job Training

No Hmong with whom we spoke reported receiving any vocational training in Fresno. One of eight men interviewed (12%) and 11,110 participants in our group meetings (10%) reported receiving some job training elsewhere in the U.S. These figures correspond closely with estimates given by our Hmong informants (about 10% of the men). Those who have received training before Fresno are mostly in their 30s and 40s and most have been trained as welders or machinists.

That no one has received any training in Fresno is hardly surprising: Until a couple months ago, there were no vocational training programs designed for refugees. The reason for this, according to local officials, is that there just have been no jobs available to train Hmong for. The Hmong are aware of this, as well. Based on recent experiences elsewhere, in which few individuals who complete training find work, Hmong individuals in group meetings strongly suggested that future training programs be designed to lead directly into placements.

Although some vocational training programs serving the general public are theoretically accessible by Hmong, the skills required (often English and math

skills are tested for screening purposes) and the lack of bilingual support services for Hmong have effectively precluded Hmong participation. Nevertheless, as noted before, many Hmong reported coming to Fresno for vocational training which they erroneously believed to be widely available here.

Hmong individuals and informants concur in the need for bilingual vocational training designed for individuals with marginal literacy skills and educational backgrounds. The recently started DSS-sponsored programs in the county and County plans for federal "targeted assistance" funds include this type of training and hopefully will begin to increase the training and employment opportunities for Fresno's Hmong.

D. Education

The education of Hmong youngsters is going to be a crucial determinant of the long-range effectiveness of Hmong resettlement, just as it has been for previous groups of Asian and other immigrants. Because of the rapid recent influx of Hmong into Fresno and Fresno's public schools, it is not easy to get a clear picture of how the Hmong school children are faring.

The state-mandated California achievement tests, given to all school children, provide a very preliminary sketch of how Hmong kids are doing in Fresno's schools. Test results kindly provided by Fresno Unified School District are tabled below for Hmong and Lao LEP students as of May 1982.

At each grade level, three pieces of information are listed in each subject area tested: the percentile, the grade equivalent (where 1.9 is the statewide average for first grade, 2.9 for second grade, 3.9 for third grade, etc.) and the number of Hmong and ethnic Lao students tested.

Several comments are in order here before considering these standardized test scores. First of all, not all students' test scores are included in these data. Only those classified as LEP (limited English proficiency) are included: Since district officials estimate that nearly 95% of the Hmong/Lao students are LEP, these results may be fairly representative of the Hmong/Lao student population (of which roughly 85% is Hmong). More importantly, the CAT tests may not be reliable indicators of future educational progress in this population. Because this group of students has been recently transplanted from a different language and cultural milieu and placed in grades according to ages, their test scores may well change over time (whereas scores of groups habituated to the U.S. educational environment are known to be relatively stable over time).

Achievement Characteristics of the Hmong/Lao

	Read			Lang			Math		
Grade	Per	GE	(N)	Per	GE	(N)	Per	GE	(N)
K	52	--	(31)	--	--	--	55	--	(31)
1	33	1.5	(78)	30	1.4	(78)	63	1.9	(84)
2	17	1.7	(62)	19	2.0	(64)	44	2.6	(67)
3	17	2.4	(44)	18	2.5	(44)	47	3.6	(46)
4	11	2.7	(50)	11	2.7	(51)	34	4.2	(51)
5	12	3.5	(35)	13	3.3	(36)	40	5.4	(44)
6	9	3.8	(40)	9	3.2	(40)	36	6.0	(40)
7	11	4.4	(9)	7	3.2	(9)	49	7.7	(9)
8	17	5.8	(8)	17	5.0	(8)	32	7.7	(8)
9	11	5.6	(13)	7	3.8	(13)	29	8.0	(13)
10	7	5.3	(11)	9	4.6	(11)	35	9.0	(11)
11	2	4.4	(5)	10	5.6	(5)	28	9.0	(5)
12	—	—	(1)	--	--	(1)	—	--	(1)
									410

These data, nevertheless, indicate the dimensions of the Hmong children's present educational problems: In reading and language arts, Hmong youngsters'

test scores are increasingly lower than their grade level, so that in the eleventh grade, for example, their verbal skills test at 4-5th grade levels, even though many have developed conversational skills more appropriate to their grade level. In mathematics, a somewhat different pattern emerges. Continued growth is taking place across the grades, and high school kids appear to be performing at about 9th grade level. Considering that these test scores include both computational and word problems, this achievement is quite remarkable. According to teachers and district officials, were it not for the language problems inherent in the written instructions and word problems, Hmong kids might well perform at or even above grade level.

Although such standardized test scores are clearly difficult to interpret at this stage of Hmong resettlement, they are critical to the Hmong students themselves: California requires students to pass such tests in order to graduate from high school. Even the most able Hmong high school students have difficulty passing the state-mandated tests.

As has been noted in other case study reports, the educational problems facing Hmong students vary with the age they entered school. Although virtually no Hmong preschoolers speak English, those who enter American schools in kindergarten or first grade seem to develop conversational English skills quickly. Few kids have been in American schools more than three or four years yet, so it is difficult to tell how well they will adjust in the long run. But it is clear enough that the older a child enters the American school system, the more problems he or she seems to have. They have less time to catch up and more to catch up with, and the loss of public assistance at 18 creates monumental pressures on those who enter as teenagers.

Estimates given in group meetings of teenagers suggest that about 50-60% of Hmong boys and 90-95% of Hmong girls drop out of high school before graduating. Loss of public support and early marriage (especially for girls)

are the leading causes of dropping out. Some fail to graduate because they fail the CTBS, the state-mandated basic skills test required for graduation (it can only be taken twice).

About 25-30 Hmong kids expected to graduate from Fresno high schools this year (asked in late April), perhaps five or six of whom would be girls. During our fieldwork, we were fortunate to attend an ongoing meeting of the Hmong Students Association, a group of about 20 college-bound Hmong high school kids. Almost all of these students hope to continue their education in two- or four-year colleges in the Fresno area. Few were optimistic that they would be able to do so. They cited the major problems being faced by the eight or so Hmong college students in Fresno: lack of financial support and poor writing skills. Even the most successful Hmong high school students feel they need much more writing instruction to continue their education effectively. Once they are mainstreamed out of ESL (generally on the basis of their oral proficiency), they receive no further special help with their English writing skills.

The college students and groups of teenagers confirmed this picture. Although some receive a Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG), others are supported by welfare whose regulations prohibit them from going full-time, and the lack of part-time jobs in the Fresno economy makes it hard for college students to work their way through school. Some work full-time for a couple of years, then go back to school and live off their savings.

Despite the many problems they must face, despite their lack of educational background before coming to the U.S., these students, and in some cases their parents, recognize the value of a higher education and are determined to get one. One parent, himself without any previous education, wrote to us:

> I've had so much to worry about my in life. My lack of English, lack of experience and many social things. So I want to beg all of you in government that will you please help us and provide a fund for our children that are going to start on their life. They need more education after high school and we the parents couldn't provide money for them to go to college and so on.

Unfortunately, even those parents who recognize the value of their children's education are not able to support it. For older students needing financial support, the money isn't there. For younger students, starting out in school, a different kind of support is needed: parental concern and involvement with their progress in school. Not surprisingly, few Hmong parents (having never been to school themselves) have the resources to provide this type of support, either. A highly educated Hmong man, who works for the County's Migrant Education Program, identifies improved parental involvement in their children's education as a foremost concern. Although the schools try to include the Hmong parents in parent-teacher meetings and school activities, the cultural and language barriers are difficult to overcome. Sustained effort at parent training, according to this informant, rather than just occasional meetings, is needed to maintain parental involvement and interest in encouraging their kids to study and do well in school.

Another issue identified by Hmong students, community leaders and teacher aides is the need for bilingual education (currently provided for the considerably larger body of Spanish-speaking students in Fresno). On one hand, the stringent California teacher certification requirements are preventing use of Hmong-speaking teachers, while on the other hand, the low rate of pay ($4.15/hour) and part-time positions for paraprofessional school personnel make it hard for the schools to retain bilingual Hmong workers: As soon as more attractive jobs open up (in social service agencies), they understandably leave the schools. This bureaucratic snafu is having

potentially devastating and long-lasting effects on thousands of Hmong school children in Fresno. The school district must be encouraged and/or assisted to take leadership in solving this problem.

E. Adult ESL

One of the major obstacles the Hmong in Fresno see to their successful resettlement is insufficient English and literacy skills. Though many people came to the Central Valley with the hope of farming, they still perceive English as necessary for succeeding in their new community. At every group meeting conducted for this study, English was identified as a particularly difficult problem. Attaining proficiency in English is seen as a necessary first step in reaching other goals--it is needed to get along with neighbors in the community, to find work, to continue with education, to set up farming or business establishments.

Many Hmong state that one reason they came to California was because they heard that there were plentiful opportunities for English language training there. This may be true in other metropolitan areas in the state where Hmong have settled, but it is not yet the case in Fresno. Fresno area adult schools are overwhelmed by the sudden large numbers of Hmong seeking ESL. Most of the English language training for adults in the Fresno area is provided by the Fresno Adult School, which is part of the Fresno Unified School District, and by Clovis Adult School, located in the nearby town of Clovis. Church groups have also begun to offer English classes to Hmong members, though it is not certain how many churches are doing this or how many people they are serving.

Fresno Adult School serves about 500-600 Hmong, and offers day and evening classes. The day classes are offered five days a week, three hours a day. The evening classes are held only two times a week, and there is no public

transportation available in the evening in Fresno. At night 60-70% of the students at Fresno Adult School are Hmong. Fresno Adult School has been teaching ESL to immigrants and Mexicans for many years, but before the Hmong came, had little experience with preliterate populations. Clovis Adult School has about 450 students, about 80% of whom are Hmong. The program offers a combination of basic skills and life skills training four hours a day, five days a week, and many Hmong come from Fresno to attend their program, which appears to be well-articulated and organized.

Administrators of both programs note that their major problems in providing ESL are lack of space and money. A cap on educational spending for the county has meant that even though there has been a large increase in adult students, the programs have not been able to grow apace. Classes are very large, averaging 40 or more students. Fresno Adult School has no ESL coordinator, and there has been little inservice training available for teachers on Hmong culture or teaching practices best suited for the Hmong, who are now the majority of students. Teachers, however, show a concern and commitment to serving the Hmong students, whose needs they recognize as different from other students they have been teaching. At Fresno Adult School, there are some preliterate classes, but they do not have bilingual help, and the overall program does not as yet have a structured curriculum. Fresno schools are still in the process of adjusting to the new numbers and types of students, and have had to make changes extremely quickly.

Hmong program participation. Based on group meetings held in Fresno, it is apparent that Fresno is not the first place most of the Hmong have attended school. Almost all of the adults had received some kind of English training prior to coming to Fresno. Many, however, still feel they need training at the most basic levels. The majority of men at these meetings said they attend

English class. Only about half of the women polled at the women's meeting said that they were attending school in Fresno, though most had attended elsewhere before.

Interviews with Hmong adults in Fresno who had moved from Portland in the last year[4] reveal that some students who wish to participate in English programs cannot do so because there is simply no room. One older student said:

> They don't tell you when school is going to start, and then when you go over to sign up, class is already full.

For the women, lack of child care is a barrier to attendance at school, as is their lower literacy rate, which necessitates enrolling in overcrowded beginning classes. All of the women attending the group meeting indicated that they want to study English so that they can help their families. One woman at the group meeting summed up the desire to study and the difficulty of doing so:

> I want to study so bad. If only someone would help me babysit! If somebody took care of my kids, I would study all day long.

Perceptions of programs and instructions. Even though most Hmong adults who can arrange to do so go to Adult School, there is a consensus that instruction is often inappropriate for their language or literacy ability, that it does not fit the actual needs of the Hmong, and that classes are far too large for effective teaching and learning.

Hmong are concerned about the instructional approaches used in class. They feel most classes are too unstructured and would prefer a more structured approach that uses fixed books and curricula. One man said:

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[4]Functional Literacy Project, NWREL

> We never study the 'beginning' of the book. The teacher needs to go step-by-step. We are adults, but we need to start like in first grade.

Many Hmong at group meetings indicated that bilingual Hmong instructors should be used at the lower levels, combining them with American instructors. With a combination of no bilinguals and seemingly unstructured teaching approaches, many feel lost.

One group of household heads likened the confusing English classes with the magic and show of the shaman, "Chu Neng." They have a joke among themselves that the English class is "Chu Neng's Room," where they are just pretending to have class, with the noise, bells and the rings. They don't know what's going on. They say, "Chu Neng's room has all the students!"

A second area of Hmong concern about English instruction is that the content is often irrelevant to the actual language needs. They need to learn to fill out a job application or get help in an emergency. One woman requested: "We would like the teacher to teach us what we are going to say at the hospital and how to get a job. We don't need to know about apples and oranges."

The large class size and inadequate materials caused by the sudden huge growth of the Adult School is seen by the Hmong as a real problem. Classes that are too large are just not effective. An elder told us, "If the classes are too big, the students go for entertainment, but not for learning." Large classes cut down on individualized instruction, making learning particularly hard for students who have limited literacy skills and cannot yet follow worksheets or books. The problems of overcrowded classes were enumerated by a student attending the open meeting for this study. He passed out a sheet of paper, with numbered points, written in English. His first three points read:

1. It has a lot of students in one class so the teacher can't teach and help everybody in class.

2. Some lessons are copied from another book but these copies are not enough for the students and after the lesson is finished, the teacher takes them back so the students don't have them to learn or study at home.

3. Please increase the classes because there are a lot of students in a class.

The context of English acquisition. Hmong in Fresno bring their experiences in Laos and in other cities with them. These experiences, and new ones in the new city, affect language learning.

Again and again, Hmong in Fresno cited physical and emotional problems stemming from war as obstacles in learning English. Many ex-soldiers have hearing or sight problems, or head injuries which they feel make it difficult for them to concentrate. Some are too depressed or worried to learn. One man told us, "The teachers are all right, but I still can't learn, because I have family problems and because of homesickness." Another said, "We keep trying to speak English, but we can't forget about the war."

In Fresno, some 10,000 Hmong are clustered in a few neighborhoods. Now there are eight Hmong grocery stores nearby. There is little opportunity for Hmong to practice English and even less contact with native English speakers than they had in other cities. The coordinator of the Clovis Adult School program feels that one of the biggest dilemmas the programs in the area now face is how to get students to speak English outside of class.

In addition to the density of settlement which discourages outside contact in English, Hmong in Fresno live in low income neighborhoods, and many of their neighbors are Spanish speakers. Interviews of Hmong individuals who have migrated from Portland[5] indicate that Hmong in Fresno have fewer

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[5]Functional Literacy Project, NWREL

American friends than they had in Portland and much less contact with any non-Hmong neighbors. Some women, who had previously attended school in Portland, relate that in Fresno they don't go to school or use English and they are forgetting what they had learned.

F. Miscellaneous Issues

Many other issues came up during our fieldwork in Fresno that were outside of the primary focus of the workplan, and therefore were not systematically investigated. Mentioned briefly here are a few which nevertheless seem central to effective Hmong resettlement.

Unmet needs. Many individuals expressed concern about certain classes of individuals not being supported by the existing array of programs and services. Two of these groups have already been mentioned--young single or childless couples over eighteen and the elderly. Two other groups frequently mentioned in our meetings are the war-injured and war-widows: There are large numbers of individuals in both groups, especially the war-injured. Most of the Hmong who participated in the war served for a long period of time and feel that they "fought for America" and that those that were injured or widowed by military action should be taken care of just as war-injured American soldiers are. Although those with demonstrable injuries are eligible to apply for SSI benefits on the same basis as the general public, many applications are refused, and indications are that uniform criteria are not in effect across the country: Some areas have reputations as being easier than others "to get SSI." A particular concern are those with psychological problems caused by the trauma of protracted warfare: Given the language and cultural barriers involved, it is difficult for the system to detect such cases.

Individuals whose applications are rejected not only fail to access needed support, they feel that America is reneging on an ethical and legal obligation entailed by its military engagement with the Hmong. Some of the translated letters in Appendix F indicate the depth of the feelings involved here.

The broken promise. As we have noted, the Hmong have been very hesitant to air grievances publicly because they do not wish to appear ungrateful for the assistance they have received in resettling in the United States. But as time passes and their problems have remained unsolved, and refugee assistance programs are increasingly cut, and prejudice persists, deeply felt grievances are increasingly coming to the surface.

The needs of the war-injured are just the tip of the iceberg. In our group meetings, the issue of the United States failing to fulfill its obligations to the Hmong was repeatedly and vociferously raised again and again. Hmong believe that the United States, in its own interests, widened the Hmong's role in the war, directed their protracted military action throughout the war, and made explicit and repeated promises to take care of the Hmong in the event the Pathet Lao won. They feel they are now being deserted by America, their role in the war has been kept from public attention (so that Americans don't understand them or why they are here), and the promise has been broken. Many are particularly bitter that their lack of previous education (which they identify as a real obstacle to gaining self-sufficiency in the U.S.) is the direct result of their being involved in the U.S.-sponsored war for the better part of their lives. One representative comment made during a large group meeting by a former soldier:

Honorable U.S. government and her citizens. Hmong resettlement here in the United States is not a simple problem that we can solve after 18 months or within a few years. According to man's history of development, it took more than a century to become modern. Hmong, unlike other refugees, Hmong came to the U.S.A. with only their lives, Hmong did not have a chance to prepare themselves before they came in. Hmong's cultural life is almost totally different than the Western society. Why did the government give Hmong an incredible 18-months period for the Hmong to prepare a self-supported life in this modern society? In this county, if we cannot speak English and no one could hire us for employment, then that is the corner for us. Unlike a developing country, where we can do whatever in the free land to support the family.

It seems that it is very difficult for the government to handle our new lives, it seems that the Americans citizens hate us; for example, welfare always says that they will cut our daily assistance, Americans always complain that we compete for their jobs in the company, employers never gave us permanent jobs, it seems that everyone tries to push us to the death corner. I would like to say a word to the American citizens that, we came here because there was no peace and freedom in our country, because the result of the war brought us not peace and freedom but Communists and death.

For those who always complain about us, want us to go back to our country, ignore us in several ways, they should learn something about what, why and how the U.S. got involved with the other country.

For example, if the U.S.A. supports us to fight for freedom, then Soviet should support the other country to fight for Communism. If the U.S.A. withdraws first then Communists control as their wish, but the result for the victims is not only Communism but also death. We would not come here if we were successful in the war.

During the Vietnam war many American citizens had demonstrations to withdraw U.S. supports, why they did not realize that after the U.S. withdrew them, refugees would follow? However, now we are here, because we trust, we are here because we thought that possible ways would exist step by step for our adaptation in the society. We will be cared for by the government and all American citizens. We love America.

The full depth and range of these feelings are well illustrated by the translated letters in Appendix F. This is not the place to consider these complex and poignant issues. It is sufficient to note that the fact that so many Hmong <u>feel</u> this way has a tremendous impact on their desire to return to Laos rather than settling here, their interpretation of American reactions to them (and perhaps their capacity to learn English?), and to the overall effectiveness of resettlement programs for Hmong.

Autopsies. Autopsies, cremations and other perceived abuses to the Hmong body (including the drawing of blood) in Western medicine and legal practice insult traditional Hmong cultural practices and religious beliefs. Hmong families repeatedly complain about deceased family members being autopsied without permission. In Hmong beliefs, failure to respect the body can have long-lasting effects on the surviving family members: Deceased ancestors may be angered, as yet unborn descendants may be born with defects homologous to the autopsy procedure (e.g., if the eye is cut, later descendants may be born blind, etc.).

It is as much the perceived lack of consideration and thoughtfulness on the part of medical authorities that is the problem here as the autopsies themselves. When Hmong are consulted in advance and the reasons for needing an autopsy are carefully explained, there has generally been no problem (e.g., in the cases of sudden death). But when no consultation at all is undertaken with the family, as has almost always been the case, problems have occurred in Fresno (and elsewhere).

One man in a group meeting described the situation:

> We have a culture we consider is good. We respect different age groups. When people die, we classify the deaths differently, like accident, natural death, etc. In the case of a sudden death in the night, maybe an autopsy is all right, but not for others. If they put a piece of metal in the body for the autopsy, the next generation will be born with a pain there. Or a baby will be born with birth defects.

We spoke with the County Coroner in Fresno about this matter. He explained that state law mandates autopsies in certain cases (regardless of the family's wishes), but allows the coroner discretion in other circumstances. To facilitate consultations with family members, a number of suggestions were made:

1. Hmong should carry some type of emergency identification which indicates that they are Hmong and whom to contact in case of accident or death.

2. Family members should be encouraged to establish medical care with a regular doctor, clinic or hospital and know where their medical records are kept.

3. Hmong should notify their doctors if they do not want autopsies.

Early pregnancy and marriage. Hmong traditionally marry and start families at a young age. This pattern has continued here. Teenage marriages and pregnancy cause a high rate of attrition from high school (particularly for girls), posing potentially long-range educational and economic problems for the next generations of Hmong-Americans.

Furthermore, there are immediate legal problems. In California, individuals under age cannot be legally married without the approval of the Family Court System. The Family Court System cannot serve Hmong interests well without considerable expertise in Hmong cultural practices regarding marriage. Yet if Hmong marriages cannot be officially sanctioned, other complications may set in: If the young mother applies for AFDC benefits, "welfare may go after the father and if he's over 18, he could be charged with statutory rape," according to one social worker. Perhaps a working relationship between the Family Court System and a Hmong community-based organzation would help to solve such problems.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF FRESNO SITE

Fresno was originally selected as a site because of its large Hmong population in general and its specific popularity as a site of secondary migration. Information collected has confirmed the significance of these factors and shed some light on the issues involved in the secondary migration. What we have learned from Fresno also highlights several other important aspects of Hmong resettlement in the U.S. Let us briefly mention a few of these: welfare disincentives, socialization problems, and psychological issues. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

A. Secondary Migration

We have seen that a variety of factors have attracted Hmong to the Central Valley: economic betterment (a combination of relatively low costs of living and high levels of welfare eligibility and benefits), family reunification, interest in farming, access to ESL training, a warmer climate and so forth. In these varied motivations can be seen a mix of traditional Hmong migration patterns (Thao, 1982) as well as reactions to differences among the characteristics of specific resettlement contexts.

As the migration into Fresno and other parts of the valley continues, a classic conflict is mounting between the need to avoid the social, political and economic problems resulting from high levels of impact, on one hand, and one of our society's most precious freedoms: the right to move. Neither the desires of resettlement policy-makers nor program planners nor even Hmong leadership to slow down this migration has been a match thus far to the lure of the Central Valley.

As we have seen, once the process starts, the magnet of family reunification and the desire of the population to live together becomes an increasingly irresistible force, even in the face of massive unemployment, welfare dependence, and inadequately funded social services. Program planners, refugee service providers, other public agencies (particularly schools and hospitals) and community leaders in general face an unhappy dilemma: They can choose to fight the tide, and eventually be overwhelmed by it, or they can try to anticipate it and plan for it. To date, Fresno's Hmong resettlement has been met by a mix of these two strategies. Agencies outside of the resettlement program, particularly schools and hospitals, have not used the best information available (i.e., from the Hmong community directly) to plan for service delivery. Much of the problem seems to be traceable to a lack of committed leadership. Some top officials seem to want to ignore the problem, somehow hoping the Hmong will disappear as suddenly as they appeared; others feel that since the "feds" have caused the problem, it's their responsibility to solve it. Neither attitude is responsive to the press of immediate problems. Both attitudes seem to underlie the lack of local coordination described by so many of the service providers.

Many other individuals and officials have responded more quickly with problem-solving approaches. Hopefully, their attitudes will prevail. It appears to be the case that the more directly individuals and agencies become involved in resettlement activities, the more responsive they become to the needs of the Hmong.

In the meantime, making better information available to both local agencies and to prospective secondary migrants is likely to help. We saw that official figures tend to be hopelessly outdated in the context of rapid migration. Whereas their use may be necessary for categorical <u>funding</u>

processes, they are not helpful for initial planning functions. Direct service providers need much closer ties to the Hmong community in order to plan future service provision more realistically as well as to implement it more effectively. The Hmong community, as well, would likely benefit from increased efforts to spread realistic information about local conditions to prospective migrants. We have seen how people moved to Fresno because of mistaken impressions about the availability of employment and training or the ease of successful farming. Although Hmong leaders have tried to do this, it is a difficult task and they cannot be expected to control decisions about moving that traditionally are made within family and lineage groups (rather than at a society-wide level).

The complex and apparently under-coordinated relationships among local, state and federal layers of the welfare system and the resettlement program also stands out when issues of secondary migration are examined. Considerable impetus to the secondary migration into California from certain states was provided by the 36- to 18-month cutback in early 1982, which effectively magnified interstate differences in the resettlement environments. If stability in the population is desired, policy changes must recognize and anticipate such effects. Some say it's the fault of the federal government for changing their regulations mid-stream; others blame the policies of the various states. But it is the lack of an integrated and coordinated set of policies that seems to magnify if not create the discontinuities in resettlement over time and space of which secondary migration is one of several symptoms.

B. Welfare Disincentives

The tremendous disincentives posed by welfare regulations on employment, farming, and education cannot be overemphasized: They really stand out in sharp relief in Fresno. The 100-hours rule, the loss of the 30+1/3 supplementation once available, the tying of medical assistance to cash assistance, and the general rigidity of the system (i.e., inability to mesh well with intermittent labor cycles) are particularly problematic. There is little provision to support what often must be a gradual transition from welfare dependence to economic self-sufficiency, particularly important for individuals with little education and few vocational or job search skills. We will not belabor these critical problems here.

C. Socialization Problems

The high concentration of Hmong in Fresno's low income housing is emerging into a de facto ghetto, replete with the accompanying notorious problems of socialization. Most Hmong are socially more isolated from other groups in Fresno than they were in other U.S. cities in which they previously lived. Although some objective measures of this are being gathered in another study, we have no hard data to report at present. But few Hmong individuals report having English-speaking friends or participating in socially integrated social activities. The effects of this on their relative rates of English acquisition, educational attainment, and economic assimilation can only be guessed at present (in relation to Hmong in other regions). Time will tell.

The development of the community as a whole may also be affected by future migration in patterns as well. Some Hmong college students we talked to in Fresno sugggested that there may be a future selective outmigration of educated Hmong from Fresno which would further complicate this situation:

Young adults who become educated and have marketable job skills may have to leave Fresno to find suitable employment.

D. Psychological Factors

Several somewhat intangible but very powerful influences on Hmong resettlement have emerged from the Fresno case study. These may be grouped as "psychological" factors, which together with the well-documented effects of protracted warfare and separation from homeland and relatives, condition the Hmong refugees' outlook on their own situation, their response to service programs, their desire to assimilate, and their hopes for the future. Two things we have examined stand out in this regard: the "broken promise" and the importance of hope for the future.

The feeling of having been deserted after having done so much for America heightens the Hmong's frustration at the current state of their resettlement and poses additional barriers to the socialization needed for learning English, assuming American social and work roles, etc.

We have also seen how hope for the future--represented as desire (and secondary migration) for better English language and job training, economic self-sufficiency through farming and employment--exerts a powerful influence on how Hmong make decisions about their own resettlement. Perhaps the most direct barometer of present Hmong hopes for the future in the U.S. are represented by estimates of those who wish to return to Laos. Informants we asked estimated that well over half of Fresno's Hmong would like to return to Laos, "because they cannot solve their problems here."

Nevertheless, there is seemingly more hope for the future in Fresno than in Orange County, despite a grimmer economic situation and fewer social services. This is hard to measure, but apparent to most observers. Perhaps

it is just a renewal provided by the move, the fact that Fresno's Hmong community is just in the process of forming, that the limits and potentialities of the situation have yet to be experienced as they have been elsewhere. Talk of building nearby "Hmong villages," of "Hmong condos," of large scale farming ventures, all abound. Help is needed to bring these dreams to fruition, to maintain that vital hope. One can only hope that hope in Fresno is realistic.

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APPENDIX A

REFUGEE POPULATIONS RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
IN FRESNO COUNTY

	Time Eligible		Time Expired	
Date	Total Refugees On Aid	Total Hmong Population on Aid	Total Refugees On Aid	Total Hmong Population on Aid
3/83	2,695	1,940	3,543	3,401
2/83	3,402			
1/83	3,119			
12/82	4,541			
11/82	3,836			
10/82	3,775			
9/82	3,832			
8/82	3,670			
7/82	3,191			
6/82	3,038			
5/82	2,748			
4/82	2,653			
3/82	2,432	1,702	700	490
2/82	2,058			
1/82	2,042			
12/81	1,852			
11/81	1,751			
10/81	1,589			
9/81	1,379			
8/81	1,204			
7/81	1,164			
6/81	1,086			
5/81	1,088			
4/81	1,000			
3/81	849	680		386
2/81	813			
1/81	727			

APPENDIX A

(Continued)

Date	Time Eligible		Time Expired	
	Total Refugees On Aid	Total Hmong Population on Aid	Total Refugees On Aid	Total Hmong Population on Aid
12/80	699			
11/80	554			
10/80	526			
9/80	429			
8/80	391			
7/80	341	164	256	4
6/80	307			
5/80	293			
4/80	279			
3/80	240			
2/80	267			
1/80	261			
12/79	235			
11/79	243			
10/79	221			
9/79	207			
8/79	Unknown			
7/79	175			
6/79	158	0	242	0

APPENDIX B

FROM FRESNO COUNTY PLAN: REFUGEE SERVICES AVAILABLE

Agency: California State Department of Rehabilitation

Address: 2550 Mariposa Street
Fresno, CA 93721

445-6011

Contact: Chris Minard

Services: Program eligibility based on Medical Disability - Available to entire population age 16 and up

Agency: Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC)

Address: 4747 North First Street
Fresno, CA 93710

225-4500

Services: Assist persons who are developmentally disabled

Service Population: Eligible county residents

Agency: Cultural Arts for You (CAFY)

Address: City Hall
3030 East Harvey Avenue
Fresno, CA

Contact: Mabella Selland

Services: Offers multiple classes to the community including a Hmong language class for service providers

Agency: Clovis Adult School

Address: 914 - 4th Street
Clovis, CA 93612

299-4367

Contact: Mary Rich
Charles Patterson

Services: High usage by refugee population. Curriculum includes ESL, Basic Education, and High School completion.

Service Population: Open to anyone over the age of 18. Classes are not targeted for refugee only

Agency: Department of Social Services

Address: 4455 East Kings Canyon Road
P.O. Box 1912
Fresno, CA 93750

453-6000

Contact: Robert W. Whittaker

Services: Title XX mandated services
Cash Assistant Program
Medical assistance
Food Stamps
Refugee Program

Service Population:	Eligible to county residents	
Agency:	Economic Opportunity Commission (E.O.C.)	
Address:	2100 Tulare Street Fresno, CA 93721	2133 Kern Street Fresno, CA -93721
	485-8340 - Ext. 32	486-1148
Contact:	Tony Souza	Rick Kubiack
Services:	Family Planning Clinic WIC Energy Subsidy Weatherization Nutrition Program Hot Meals for Seniors	Central Intake Unit Employment Related Activities
Service Population:	Eligible county residents	
Agency:	Fresno Adult Literacy Council	
Address:	2237 East Clinton Avenue Fresno, CA 93703	
	224-4171	
Contact:	Lorene Cannon, Executive Director	
Services:	Provides tutorial program of ESL	
Service Population:	Available for students and adults. Refugee population has made use of the council's services.	
Agency:	Fresno AduTt School	
Address:	2305 East Dakota Avenue Fresno, CA 93726	
	441-3272	
Contact:	Don McColm	
Services:	Adult School Curriculum Offers 1. ESL (28 classes) 2. Basic Education Classes 3. High school completion 4. Vocational classes 5. Other type classes	
Service Population:	Open to anyone over the age of 18. Classes are not targeted for refugee only.	
Agency:	Fresno County Department of Education	
Address:	Consultant, Fresno County Department of Education 2314 Mariposa Street Fresno, CA 93721	
	488-3308	
Contact:	Maria de los Angeles Ramos	

Contact: Mary Lloyd

Migrant Education
2314 Mariposa Street
Fresno, CA 93721

225-6612

Services: Each county school district has mandated responsibility to provide ESL for their student populations.

Agency: Family Court Services

Address: 2100 Tulare Steet, Room 220
Fresno, CA 93721

488-3241

Contact: Wayne Couvillion

Harold Gaede

Services: Evaluation of minor's requesting permission to marry.
Evaluation/stepparent adoption
Medication/counseling

Service Population: Available to county residents.

Agency: Fresno Unified School District

Address: Tulare and M Street
Fresno, CA 93721

441-3683

Contact: Ruth Horne, Coordinator

Multilingual Education

Services: Curriculum resource for refugee students

Service Population: Eligible county residents

Agency: Valley Medical Center (VMC)

Address: 445 South Cedar Avenue
Fresno, CA 93702

453-5777

Services: Inpatient Services
Outpatient Clinical Services
Emergency Services

Service Population: All County residence

Agency:	U.S. Immigration Service
Address:	1130 O Street Fresno, CA 93721
	487-5091
Contact:	Joe Bennett
Services:	Immigration Services Naturalization Services
Service Population:	All residents

Refugees also have access to the following county agencies:

	TELEPHONE
Administrative Office	488-1710
Agriculture	453-5960
Assessor	488-3514
Auditor-Controller	488-3496
Board of Supervisors	488-3531
Community Development	488-3047
Coroner, Public Administrator, Public Guardian	488-3126
County Clerk, Recorder, Registrat of Voters	488-3375
District Attorney	488-3133
Education	488-3288
Farm and Home Advisors	453-5931
Health Department	445-0666
Justice Courts	
Coalinga	935-2017
Firebaugh-Kerman	659-2011
Fowler-Caruthers	864-3160 or 834-321!
Kingsburg-Riverdale	897-2241 or 867-344!
Reedley-Dunlap	638-3114
Sanger	875-7158
Selma-Parlier	896-2123 or 646-281!
Library	488-3191
Local Agency Formation Commission	488-1688
Municipal Court	488-3452
Personnel Management	488-3362
Planning	453-3877
Probation	488-3427
Public Defender	488-3546
Public Works	453-3844
Resources and Development	453-3997
Sheriff	488-3121
Social Services	453-6000
Superior Court	488-1625
Treasurer-Tax Collector	488-2947
Valley Medical Center	453-5232
Veteran's Service	488-3436
Weights, Measures and Consumer Protection	453-5904

Name of Agency: AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR NATIONALITIES SERVICE

Address: 315 Crocker Bank
Fresno, CA 93721

237-8359

Contact: Debbie Ramirez

Funding: FY 1982 - United Way
State Funds

FY 1983 - ?

Staff: 1981 - 4½ persons
1982 - 3 (2 4/5 aides)
(1 Director)

Population: October 1, 1981 to June 30, 1982

225 Individuals

1980-1981 - 2,000 Duplicated Services

Projects: 1975-1982 - Social adjustment

Services: Health Related

Transportation

Resettlement
1982 - Health access only - related services to health needs

Translation
Resettlement

Refugee Population: 3,500 Hmong

1,500 Vietnamese

Referral Source: Relatives, friends

Name of Agency: EDD - CALIFORNIA STATE EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPT.

Contact: Bob Gutierrez
2555 So. Elm

445-5148

Jon Rollins
4584 E. Olive Ave
Fresno, CA 93702

252-1821

Al Boutte, District Administrator
2555 So. Elm
Fresno, CA 93706

445-5266

Contact count: EDD doesn't keep Refugee statistics

Funding: Fresno has no special state grants for refugees.

Alameda and Orange Co. have had special monies.

Services: Refugees are funnelled through two programs that are open to all.

1. Service Center Programs

   Working intensely with those clients who have barriers to employment, i.e., language.

2. Job Agent

   Works with clients who meet multiple federal criteria for the disadvantaged.

Referral Source: General public/community resource.

Name of Agency: FRESNO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - HEALTH SERVICES

Section - Decentralized Nursing

Contact: Margaret Wing, PHN #445-3330

Address: Office: Brix Building
1221 Fulton Mall

Mail: P.O. Box 11867
Fresno, CA 93775

Funding Source: State Health Department

Special Project - Grant runs our 9-30-82(?)

Staff: 3 Aides (2 Hmong, 1 Vietnamese)
1 Public Health Nurse

Project Focus: Health screening is offered through the Pinedale Clinic. The physician is Dr. Nuygen. 30% of the clinic population is Indo-Chinese. Use of the clinics dropping off as the community now has 2 Vietnamese doctors in private practice. There is a Caucasian doctor in Sanger with a Hmong Office assistant - (Lee Mara).

Contacts:

Fiscal Year:	1981	1982
Primary:	114	?
Secondary:	414	?
Contacts:	450	?

No population count of those refugee services through normal nursing services such as pre- and postnatal follow-up or adult patient nursing services is available. This population is mainstreamed into MH and HD services.

Referral Source: U.S. Public Health for primary refugees (within first 18 months).

Secondary migration families are referred by schools and DSS eligibility.

Name of Agency:	INDO-CHINESE REFUGEE LEARNING CENTER
Address:	First Baptist Church 1401 E. Lansing Way Fresno, CA 93704 227-8476
Contact:	Betty Bryant (Volunteer Director)
Funding:	9/80-6/81 Volunteer time, money and material from Japanese Methodist Church women. Other women's groups and educational groups. CSUF. Early education staff. 9/81-7/82 Volunteer staff Donations of $500 from Central California Asian Pacific Women (CCAPW) $3,000 from Central California Associates for the Education of the Young. 9/82 - Volunteer Staff $700 from CCAPW Church World Services - Salary for teacher
Staff:	1 Paid Teaching position 1 Volunteer Director - Betty Bryant 1 Volunteer Health Director - Beryl Curry, R.N. 2 C.S.U. Consultants - Joyce Higgins, PHD. and Shareen Abramson, PHD. Student placements Volunteer parental help
Population:	1981-82 Enrolled 55 children with average daily attendance of 23 to 35. ESL enrollee 30-40 1980-81 - Enrolled 60 children with average daily attendance of 23 to 25 children. ESL enrollees - 30
Project:	Projected stated 9/29/80 with the ESL class at the Ted Wills Center. Center then moved to the First Baptist Church
Services:	1. Provides learning center for children while mother's attend E.S.L. classes. 2. Health Access 3. School readiness for 3-5 year olds. 4. Social adjustment for children & mothers.
Ethnic Participation:	Hmong Laotians Vietnamese Cambodians Chinese Hispanic
Referral Source:	Self referrals

Name of Agency: LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION & REFUGEE SERVICES

Address: 4863 E. Tulare
Fresno, CA

253-4237, if no answer 255-7172

Contact: Pastor Norman Johnshoy

Funding Source: No direct funding (volunteer time and effort). 13 Lutheran congregations in Fresno have directly sponsored families. No direct survey has been completed, but Lutheran Social Services feels they have served approximately 12 to 15 families.

Services: No direct services to community. Families are linked to direct services in the community.

Primary Referral Source: National Lutheran Services
The families are matched through refugee camps in Thailand.

Name of Agency: RED CROSS

Address: 1841 Fulton Street
Fresno, CA 93721

486-0701

Contact: Director of Emergency Service
1. Disaster
2. Military
3. International Service
Working with Refugees in the United States to link with family in Refugee camps.

Name of Agency: UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Program: Refugee Services

Contact: Tom Nguyen, Project Director

Address: 3510 E. Ventura
Fresno, CA 93702

237-0851

Service Components:

I. Contact for Cubans
Project time - 4 months (State program) expires ?
Scope - ESL & Job Development
Supervises Fresno area
Limited to single males
Cubans are considered migrant status pending.

II. Polish Refugee
Help with resettlement monies

Service Components:

III. Haitian - no monies

VI. Case management -

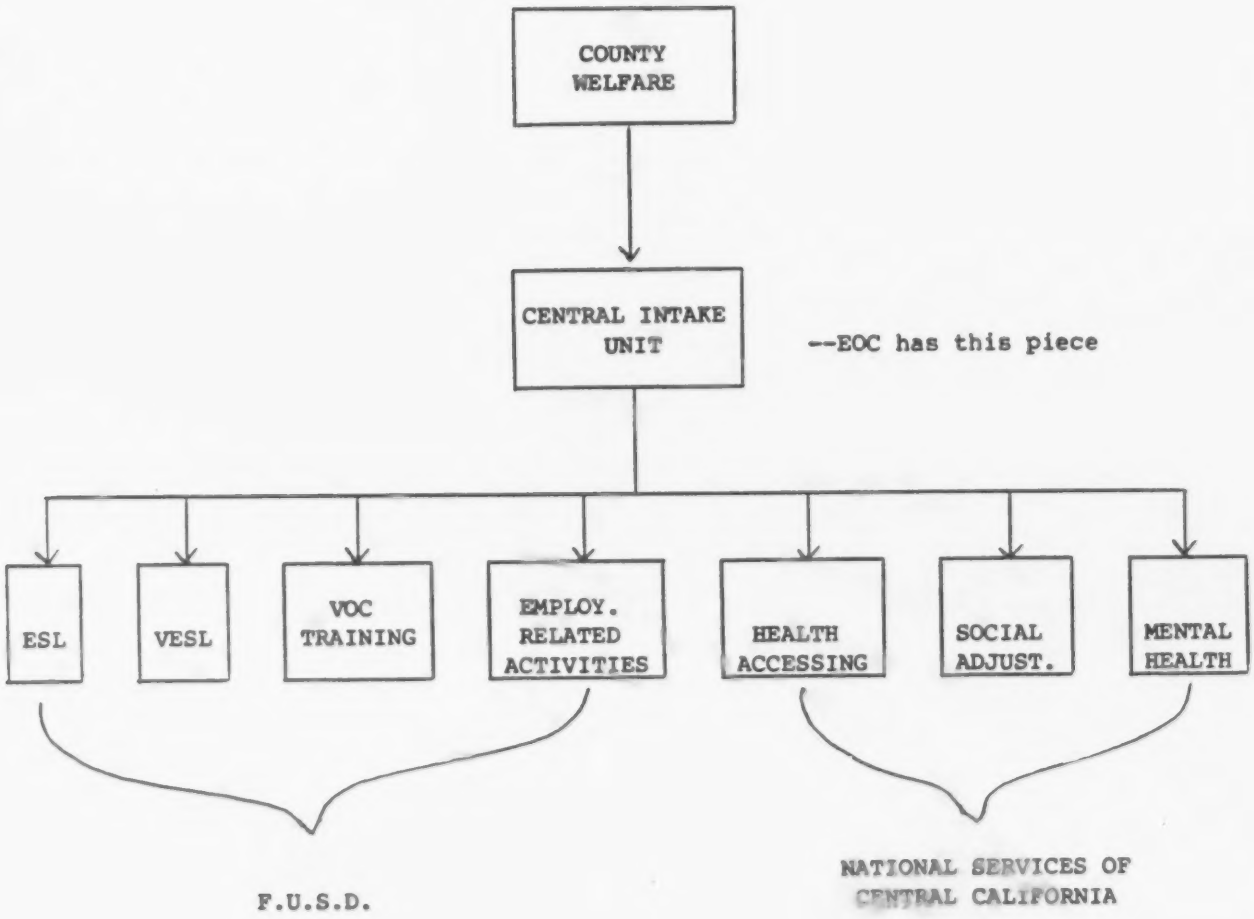
Primary refugees only - Indo-chinese, Polish and other designated refugees

Referral source - USCC

V. Merced has Job Developer and a Hmong worker.

APPENDIX C

ORGANIZATION OF SERVICES IN NEW DSS PROJECT



APPENDIX D

LETTER FROM HMONG MAA TO TARGETED ASSISTANCE PLANNING MEETING

Appendix D

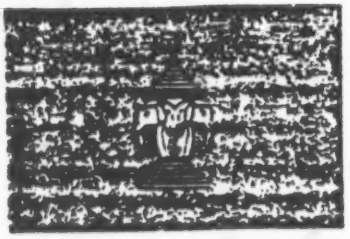
ADULT REFUGEE SERVICES
2305 E. Dakota
441-3273

LAO FAMILY COMMUNITY INC.

A Non-Profit Organization

อົງການສາມັກຄີຄອບຄົວລາວ

May 13, 1983



TO: Members of the Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement and Immigration

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Hmong Refugee Community of Fresno, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have provided services to refugees. Thank you for the kindness and professional help you have given.

In the past eight years, services have not met the needs of the refugee community. Now it is time to look at the needs of refugees rather than agency needs. It is time for the refugees to build a strategic plan and to set up community economic development, community vocational training and small business management. It is time to give the refugees more community control in the decision-making process. The refugees are in a position to know what it is they need to solve their problems. Agriculture is one of the community vocational training programs that is needed. As you know, the Hmongs have skills in farming by hand, but have suffered from a lack of modern techniques and equipment. We recommend that the State Government be encouraged to locate unused, arable, state-owned lands and initiate model Hmong community agricultural projects with the active participation of the Agricultural Department of the State University.

A completed proposal for the Targeted Assistance Grant will be submitted to the County. This Grant should be used wisely by the refugees to develop programs and leadership in the refugee community. Refugees associations have a great deal of responsibility to the secondary migrants. The number of secondary migrations has daily increased; the situation has worsened. We, the refugees, need a center which can be used as Central Offices to assist our people in finding jobs, learning English, Social Services, translation, referrals, legal aid, community liaison, adjustment of status and citizenship orientation, economic development, space meetings, emergency shelters, traditional arts and crafts, child care and recreation. We request the government to provide technical assistance to the refugees community.

It is known that cultural differences exist between Hmong and American family systems. We, therefore, request the State and Local Governments to recognize Hmong family customs such as early marriage, the marriage elopement and the clan resolution of family problems. We also request the Joint Committee to give their public approval and support to the Hmong system of arbitration and problem resolution, especially in the area of family law, so that Hmong clan leaders will be consulted by U.S. civil authorities before formal legal action is initiated. We feel that this would be the most sensible, humane and cost-efficient solution to an issue which greatly disturbs the traditional Hmong life style.

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Hmong refugees have high numbers of teenagers who came from the refugee camps with no formal education. They are entered into the American educational system at a grade level equivalent to their age. These teenagers are facing a great many problems. If they are 18 or older, they are not able to enroll in school, yet they are not eligible for any assistance. Many of them came to the United States without parents and with no means of support.

In conclusion, we again want to express our sincere recognition and deep appreciation for the understanding and hospitality the American people have extended. These courtesies will never be forgotten by the Hmong people.

Thank you,

Tony Vang
ARS Project Director
President, Lao Family Community Inc.

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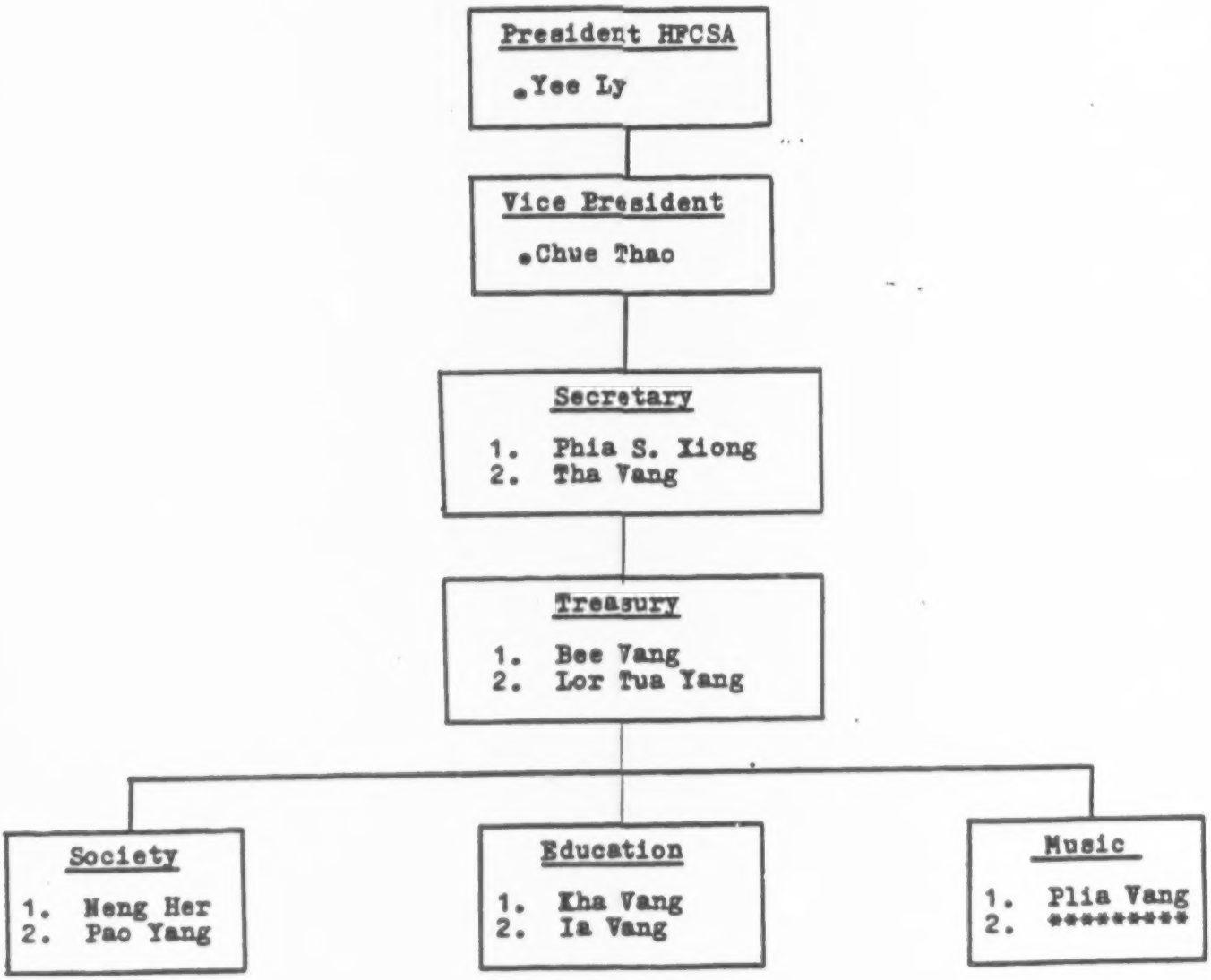
APPENDIX E

ORGANIZATION OF HMONG STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
(Exemplary Project)

HMONG FRESNO COUNTY
STUDENTS ASSOCIATION
TERM 1982-83

ORGANIZATION PARTY OF STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION



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APPENDIX F

Translations of Letters Received from Fresno

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C

4/27/83

FIRST, MY NAME IS _____ I HAVE TO ASK YOU FOR EXCUSE ME WHO ARE OUR PARENT. YOU GIVE US THIS TIME TO EXPRESS THE HMONG LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY. I PERSONALLY WOULD LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS. WHEN I LIVED IN LAOS I PERSONALLY HAVE BEEN WORKED MANY PLACE AS EXAMPLE 1976 WE HAD BEEN FIGHTED WITH THE COMMUNIST AND SO MANY COMMUNIST SOLDIER WERE KILLED. I WAS WOUNDED IN MY RIGHT SHOULDER AND IS SCARRED NOW, AND WHEN WE LIVE THERE WE DID NOT GO TO SCHOOL AT ALL BECAUSE OUR COUNTRY HAS INVOLVED IN WAR. WE ARE NOT EDUCATED BECAUSE OUR COUNTRY IS VERY BAD AND THAT BECAUSE AMERICAN WENT THERE TO INVOLVE TO MAKE OUR COUNTRY LOST, NOW I ARRIVE

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IN THIS COUNTRY I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SEEK FOR A JOB TO LIVE. I AM GLAD TO GET TO TALK TO YOU AS OUR PARENT THAT WE DON'T KNOW ANY WORD, AND SINCE I HAVE LIVED IN THIS COUNTRY I HAVE GONE TO APPLY FOR MANY JOB BUT NOBODY EVER ACCEPT ME THEREFORE NOW I THINK THAT I HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL ONLY, INSTEAD.

GOOD BYE MY NAME IS

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(2)

4/30/83

THE POORNESS OF THE HMONG NEW LIFE

SINCE ~~THE OF~~ 1980 IN APRIL I HAVE COME TO THE U S A AND I HAVE SEEN THE MANY HARDSHIP HAPPEN TO US.

1. BECAUSE IN THE PAST OUR COUNTRY WERE IN THE WAR, WE DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO SCHOOL. AT THE PRESENT WE ARE IN THE U.S. WE DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE, WE ~~ARE~~ HAVING DIFFICULT TIME TO COPE FOR LIVING. THIS IS WHY WE ARE GATHERING IN GROUP AND WAIT TO SEE IF SOMEONE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ASSIST OUR NEED.

2. TALKING, ~~FR~~ THE NEED OF OUR PEOPLE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANT, IS VERY BADLY BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE - DON'T SPEAK THE LANGUAGE WE GO TO FIND FOR JOB, BUT NO ONE HIRE US. AT LAST WE HAVE TO REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT LIKE THIS →

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WE WANT THE GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA HELD US TO FIND A WAY FOR US, THE REFUGEE TO MAKE A BETTER LIVING AND BETTER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AT THIS TIME.

3. BESIDE, WE, THE REFUGEE MOSTLY WERE SERVED FOR AMERICAN AS SOLDIERS, WE ARE REQUESTING FOR BETTER WAY TO WALK ON AS WELL AS MANY OTHER GROUP OF REFUGEE WHO HAD COME TO THIS COUNTRY BEFORE. WE WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH FOR YOU TO CONCERN OUR NEED FOR US.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

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4/30/83

WANTING TO SHARE OUR LIVING SITUATION AS FOLLOW.

1. IN THE PAST, WE LIVED IN OUR OWN COUNTRY WE DID NOT DEPEND ON ANYBODY IN ORDER TO MAKE OUR LIVING, WE DID OUR OWN FARMING AND DEPEND ON ITSELF.

2. SINCE 1961, LAOS WAS DETROYED BY THE COMMUNIST LITTLE BY LITTLE AND THEY TRIED TO CONTROL THE LAOTIAN POPULATION AS WELL. IT WAS VERY NECCESSARILY TO BECOME REFUGEES, NEEDING A PLACE TO STAY AND FOODS TO EAT IN FOREIGN COUNTRY UNTIL TODAY.

3. THE PROBLEM THAT THE HMONG REFUGEE HAVE TO MOVE FROM MOSTLY NORTHERN TO SETTLE IN CALIFORNIA HERE. THERE, ONE THING WE WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO EXPLAIN TO YOU - THE AMERICAN OFFICER THAT, IS A VERY VERY SORROWFUL MATTER. →

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"WE KNOW THERE IS NOTHING CAN CHANGE DEAD INTO LIFE".

4. IN LAOS ANYBODY FROM AGE 15-16 HAD TO HOLD ARMS TO AGAINST THE COMMUNIST AND HAVE NOT ATTENDED ANY SCHOOL FOR MOST PEOPLE. AT PRESENT WE ARE IN AMERICA WE DON'T HAVE ANY SKILL. THIS IS SIMETHING WE WANT THE OFFICER AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM FOR US WHO HAS NO VOCATIONAL SKILL

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I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION THE PAST EXPERIENCES SINCE 1975 UNTIL PRESENT. AFTER ESCAPING LAOS TO THAILAND IN REFUGEE CAMP BAN VINAI, ALL OF THE NESCCEESSARY, SUPPLIES SUCH AS PLACES TO STAY AND FOOD TO EAT ARE ALL AMERICAN AND THAI GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTION. OBVIOUSLY, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO STAY IN THE CAMP. THEY PROVIDE JUST ENOUGH TO SURVIVE - TO KEEP ALIVE ONLY. IN 1978 I ARRIVED IN AMERICA IN STATE OF UTAH, CITY OF FILLMORE, THERE WAS NO ASSISTANT PROGRAM THERE TO ASSIST ME AT ALL. NO HOUSE TO LIVE, I HAD TO STAY WITH RELATIVE ONLY. I HAVE WORKED FOR 2 YEARS IN UTAH, I HAD VERY DIFFICULTY TIME FACING LANGUAGE PROBLEM. NO SPEAKING, →

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TALKING AND DID NOT KNOW WHERE TO GO.

I DECIDED TO MOVE TO CITY OF FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, HOPING FOR AN ENGLISH CLASS TO HELP US TO IMPROVE THE LANGUAGE FOR THE FAMILY FOR BETTER FUTURE IN THE COUNTRY OF AMERICA.

SOMETIME THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ASK ME WHY THE HMONG PEOPLE WHO COME TO AMERICA FOR 4-5 YEARS AND DIDN'T LEARN THE LANGUAGE AT ALL, AND DID NOT EVEN SPEAK A LITTLE. THAT BECAUSE WHEN I STAY IN LAOS I DIDN'T HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY. WE LIVE ON THE MOUNTAIN ONLY AND LIVE VERY INDEPENDENTLY BY OURSELF AND I WAS SOLDIER SINCE 1960 UNTIL LAOS FAIL TO COMMUNIST. THE HMONG PEOPLE, WE ARE VERY AMBITIOUS AND SMART, BUT NOT EDUCATED AT ALL. BECAUSE I LIVED ON THE MOUNTAIN ONLY AND NEVER SAW SCHOOL, HOSPITAL

OVER

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AND MARKET. IT WAS VERY HARD TO SEND OUR CHILDREN AND NEPHEW TO SCHOOL IN DIFFERENT STATE BECAUSE I WAS POOR PERSON.

THE AMERICAN SAY THAT OTHER GROUP OF PEOPLE SUCH AS CHINESE, VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, THAI LEARN THE LANGUAGE FASTER THAN THE HMONG PEOPLE. THEY STUDY FOR 2-3 YEARS ONLY. THEY CAN SPEAK WITH THE NATIVE AMERICAN. AND I WANT TO SAY TO THE AMERICAN THAT THEY HAVE TO THINK CAREFULLY ON: THE HMONG EDUCATION BACKGROUND: THEIR LIFE IN LAOS AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL LEVEL. I STUDY THE LANGUAGE IN AMERICA HERE JUST LIKE KIDS WHO ARE 4-5 YEARS OLD. LEARN NOTHING. IF SPEAK THE LANGUAGE AS WELL AS THE NATIVE AMERICA I CERTAINLY WANT TO REFUSE PUBLIC ASSISTANT.

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I TRY TO GET JOB AND WORK. IF THE GOVERNMENT DON'T HAVE A WELFARE PROGRAM LIKE THIS TO ASSIST THE POOR PEOPLE, CAN THEY LIVE? JUST BECAUSE THE AMERICAN'S IDEA TO MAKE OUR LAOS COUNTRY TO HAVE WAR TO FIGHT EACH OTHER. I AM HERE JUST BECAUSE THE AMERICAN. I AM AN UNEDUCATED PERSON AND POOR WITH NO MONEY, NO HOUSE. I CAME HERE JUST BECAUSE THE AMERICAN SENT ME. THEREFORE, PLEASE HELP US UNTIL WE ARE AS EDUCATED AS THE AMERICAN SO WE WILL NOT HAVE PROBLEM TO STRIVE FOR OUR LIVING IN THIS COUNTRY. BECAUSE THIS COUNTRY IS DIFFER FROM OUR COUNTRY, NOT EDUCATED LIKE ME - NO JOB.

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(5)

REPORTING

I WOULD LIKE TO REPORT SOME QUESTIONS AS DETAIL AS FOLLOWED.

IN 1962 I BECAME SOLDIER WITH GENERAL VANG PAO AND AMERICAN. SINCE THEN IN DECEMBER 1963 AND APRIL 1964 WE STARTED FIGHTING. IN APRIL THE RED VIETNAMESE HAD BOMBED US. I WAS COVERED ALL OVER BY DIRT, MY CLOTHES WAS COMPLETELY TORN OFF. MY BODY ~~WAS~~ WAS INJURED SOME AREA. THAT MADE MY BRAIN CELL DAMAGED.

IN 1970 THE RED VIETNAMESE HAD BOMBED US AND MY EYE WAS INJURED. BESIDE, THE VILLAGE WAS BURNED AND I WAS HEATED VERY SERIOUSLY BY THE FIRE WHICH I FELT MY BRAIN CELL WAS BADLY DAMAGED AND MY MIND FUNCTION ABNORMALLY SINCE. →

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WE WERE IN THE POSITION LIKE ROAST CHICKEN ON FIRE, AS MENTION ABOVE MY EYE DIDNT SEE WELL AFTER. IN OCTOBER 1972 WE INVADED BAN(CITY) YONG HANG. CITY OF MOUNG KING THE RED VIETNAMESE HAD BOMBED US AND THIS TIME ONE BIG BOMB EXPLODED VERY CLOSE BY ME AND I FEET LIKE MY MIND WAS WORSE AND MY THINKING WAS NOT VERY CREATIVE SINCE AFTER THE FIGHT, WE ESCAPE THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH NO FOOD EXCEPT LEAVES ANY SOME WILD FRUIT THAT COULD SAVE US. WITH THOSE UNUSUAL FOODS I HAD DIRRHEA FOR A NUMBER OF DAYS.

IN DECEMBER 1972 I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE CITIES CALLED LA XENG AND PHOU YER, NOT LONG WE DEFEATED AND WENT TO KHANG KHOUA WE ATE ONLY DRY RICE AND DRANK WATER FROM CRATER.

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I HAD DRINK AND EATEN THOSE BAD THINGS AND MADE MY BODY FUNCTION ABNORMALLY. AND HAD CONSTIPATE. IN MARCH 1972-73 I WENT FOR A TREATMENT THE SYMPTOM, BUT IT DIDNT HELP. THEN I DECIDED TO RESIGN MY PROFESSION AS SOLDIER AND AFTER THAT I WENT FOR MORE TREATMENT AND IT WAS DISCOVERED BY DECEMBER 1974. IN 1975. GENERAL VANG PAO AND THE AMERICAN HAD TO ESCAPE OUR COUNTRY. THAT TIME THE RED VIETNAMESE HAD SAID THAT ANY MEN WHO WAS 6 MONTHS OLD AND UP WOULD ALL BE KILLED BY THE RED VIETNAMESE. AS A RESULT MYSELF AND THE FAMILY HAD DECIDED TO LEAVE OUR NATIVE VILLAGE AND CITY BECAUSE THE RED VIETNAMESE AND ESCAPE ALONG WITH GENERAL VANG PAO.

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UNTIL 1978, I GOT TO COME TO THE NORTHERN PART OF AMERICA. THAT AREA WAS VERY VERY COLD. I HAD TERIBLE TIME WITH THE SNOW THEN LATER AFTER THAT MY OLD SYMPTOM HAS OCCURED AGAIN, THE SAME AS BEFORE. THAT TIME I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE LANGUAGE. THE DOCTER COULD NOT TREAT ME. SO I HAD TO MOVE TO CALIFORNIA HERE. WHEN I ARRIVED CALIFONIA. MY EAR BEGAN TO ACHE. NOT LONG MY EAR DRUM WAS BROCEN AND THEN I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING. THE DOCTOR OPERATED IT, BUT STILL COULDN'T HELP. AFTER THAT I WENT TO REQUEST FOR SOME MEDICINE FROM THE DOCTOR AND I WAS WITHDRAWED BLOOD. MEANWHILE I BECAME UNCONSCIOUS FOR 5 MINUTE, AND FELT PAIN IN MY OLD STOMACH AGAIN.

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AND WERE HAVING CONSTIPATE FOR A LONG PERIOD BEFORE IT BECAME NORMAL. AT THAT TIME 50% DIE AND 50% ALIVE.

MY FAMILY AND MYSELF HAD ARRIVED IN AMERICA IN 1978. THE GOVERNMENT HAVE ASSISTED US VERY VERY GOOD UNTIL TODAY, BUT I STILL COULD NOT WORK AND COULD NOT LEARN THE LANGUAGE. THE WELFARE ALLOWED ME TO APPLY FOR THE HANDICAPED PROGRAM TO SEE IF I WOULD QUALIFIED FOR IT. WHEN I WENT THERE TO SEE THE DOCTOR, THE DOCTOR DID NOT AGREE THAT I SHOULD APPLY FOR THE HANDICAPPED PROGRAM. THE DOCTOR SAID MY SYMPTOM WAS/IS NOT SERIOUS ENOUGH TO GET IN THE HANDICAPPED PROGRAM AT ALL. THEN, I ASK THE DOCTOR TO WRITE ME A PERMISSION TO WORK, BUT THE DOCTOR DID NOT AGREE TO ISSUE ONE FOR ME→

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EITHER. THE DOCTOR SAID TO ME THAT I DID NOT HAVE SUCH PROBLEM, HE SAID THAT I WAS ONLY DEPRESSED. WHEN THE DOCTOR SAID TO ME THAT IT MADE ME VERY UNSATISFIED. I AM HANDICAPPED BECAUSE I DID SACRIFIED MY BLOOD FOR THE COUNTRY, I HAVE THE PROBLEM AS EXPLANING SO FAR THE DOCTOR STILL SAID IT WAS NOT TRUE. I SAW DOCTOR HAD VERIFIED FOR OTHER PEOPLE WHO WAS NOT SOLDIER BEFORE, EVEN AGE 9-10 TO BE ABLE TO QUALIFY FOR THE HANDICAPPED PROGRAM. AS I KNOW THEIR PROBLEM IS NOT ANY WORSE THAN MINE. AND WE WHO HAD HELPED AMERICAN AND SACRIFIED OUR BLOOD FOR THE COUNTRY, THEY SAY WE ARE NOT QUALIFIED TO BE IN THE PROGRAM. I WANT VERY MUCH TO KNOW THE LAW OF THE GOVERNMENT AND IT WORK. IF WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE IN THE HANDICAPPED PROGRAM THEN. THERE IS →

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NO NEED TO BE SOLDIER ANY MORE. BECAUSE WE HAD HELPED AMERICAN TO AGAINST THE RED VIETNAMESE AND NOW WE HAVE ALL KINDS OF HANDICARPED AND HAVE NO RIGHT AT ALL.

TO TRANSLATOR: PLEASE TRANSLATE INTO ENGLISH AS I WANT. IF ANY PROBLEM SHOULD OCCUR I, THE REPORTER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT.

THANKS A LOT

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(2)

1 we don't want a doctor or some bady ele TO take any part out of Hmong cliad body.

2 we want the government borrow a money TO us TO buy one par of land That belong to us, and we well pay it leter.

3 we want more Education, training, and skills.

4 because we don't want to stay in the puplic syteam welfa

4 we would Like to live together in one Cornty or one city because we are not like the other people. so we can control us.

Fresno, Cali. 4-30, 83

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(7)

IN MAY / 3 / 62. I WENT TO JOINT THE ARMY AS A SOLDIER IN DISTRICT OF 13 A. FOR 6 MONTH. THE COMMUNIST SOLDIER BOMBED US AND I WAS WOUNDED IN MY HEAD. NOW I AM DUMBED. I CAN NOT LEARN ENGLISH AND SPEAK IT. I LOST MY BRAIN LIKE RIGHT NOW. UNTIL MAY 15, 75 THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ALLOWED OUR LEADER GENERAL VANG PAO TO ESCAPE TO THAILAND THEN WE HAD TO ESCAPE, TOO. BECAUSE IF WE STAY THE COMMUNIST SOLDIER WOULD KILL US. THERLFORE WE ESRADED TO THAILAND. NOW WE ARE IN AMERICA. I CAME ON 7/22/82. I AM REQUESTING THE UNITED NATION TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP MY FAMILY AND MYSELF TO NOT STARVING BECAUE I HAVE A DAMAGED MIND NOW.

NAME . . .

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(3)

I WAS INVOLVED TO BE AN AMERICAN SOLDIER SINCE 1961 UNTIL 1975. UNLUCKILY, IN 1973 COMMUNIST FORCE HAD INVADED OUR VILLAGE, NAM HIO, CITY OF MOUNG MOUK AND MY WIFE WAS SHOT AND BECOME HANDICAPPED AT THIS BATTLE. SHE CAN NOT WORK ANY MORE. PLEASE HELP ME TO REPORT MY CASE TO THE GOVERNMENT TO WHOM MAY CONCERN. AT PRESENT SHE CAN ONLY STAY HOME.

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(9)

4-30-83

1- NEEDING HMONG BILINGUAL TEACHER TO TEACH BEGINNING CLASS IN ADULT SCHOOL.

2- NEEDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL.

3- NEED THE COMPANY TO HELP TO ACCEPT OUR PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE LANGUAGE WELL TO WORK. WE CAN DO THE WORK.

4- NEEDING HELP FOR PEOPLE WHO WERE SOLDIER FOR AMERICAN AND ARE HANDICAPPED SUCH AS THE WIDOWER WHOSE HUSBAND WAS KILLED IN THE BATTLE TO HAVE ENOUGH FOR LIVING.

5- NEEDING HELP THOSE WHO WERE SOLDIER FOR AMERICAN AT LEAST 15 YEARS THEN JUST HELP THEM LIKE A REGULAR AMERICAN CITIZEN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

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(10)

4/28/83

A Letter About the Hmong's Life.

When we lived in our country (Laos). We farmed to make a living. We could survive without any body's help. We didn't ask for any body's welfare to help us. But the U.S. government came to start wars with the Communists in our country. When they left we couldn't live, because the Communis will kill us all as the result of being the soldiers of the U.S. army. So, we had to escape from death and came to this country (U.S.A.).

In this country, we couldn't prepare our own needs, because we can't speak English. We can't work, because of that problem. The people who were disable by the injury of war don't even get benefits, too, because they have been many years in this country.

That's why some people killed themselves by hanging themselves, take many pills to kill themsel or kill themselves with knife. We please you the governments to do something about these problems, too before it gets too deep into it.

I hope you understood, thank you.

Yours truthly,

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(11)

April 29, 1983

I had been helping the U.S. Army in my country (Laos) from 1961-75. Since our country took over by the Communist. I moved to Thailand and lived at the refugee camp. In 1978 some American came over there and told me if I was helping the U.S. army, I should come to the United States, but I told them that it was so difficult for me to lived in the United States. Because I was an unliterate man and It was so difficult for me to take care of my family. They told me that I didn't have to worry. They will teach me untill I can read and write English good enough so I can take care of my family. They promised me that they will take care of my family. Because they have the program to help. It was not true. Since I came to this country in 1979. I was in Nashville, Tennessee. They didn't have any money program that will help my family, not even a school program that will help adults to learn. So I just work and never learn English untill July 24, 1982. Can you think, How difficult a person can't read or write work and live in this country.

Please give us more school programs for adults and money programs to help us untill the time we can find our own jobs.

Sincerely yours,

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(12

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1. It has a lot of student in one class so the the teacher can't teach and help everybody in class.
2. Some lessons are copied from another books but these copies are not enough for the students. and after the lesson finished the teacher takes them back so the students don't have them to learn or study at home.
3. Please increase the class because there has a lot of student in a class.
4. Please provide a program training to train men and women to have skills and can find a job
5. We don't have the opportunity to go to college or Vacational training because we don't have money and skill when we take the test we don't have a good grade so we were not allowed to study there. Before here we need the skill.
6. About farming, we don't know how to farm and don't have the skill about it. Moreover, we don't have money to rent the farm and buy equipment.

Thank you.

(13

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To all of the government that helping and suppating all of our refugees need today. I want all of you to analize it the difficult situation that we the Hmong Refugee are facing today.

When I was in Laos, I've also help fought the war over and over. When we first start in war, men don't have to be educated or even have training. I was a farmer before that, and all I have to do is to use my body and energy to fight the war and to fight for our life. Still I was luck, I still alive when we lost the war, the country, and the home land the we Hmong people use to live. Then I came to Thailand, which because I could never live in Laos any more. After stay in Thailand for several year, I get my name in coming to the U. S.

When I was in Thailand nobody have ever been told of How is Americ. I've come to America blindly, don't know abot the future, don't know about what life will be like in America, and now come the many things the life is being difficult for us to live in America if we got cut of from welfare. The reasons is that for people that half age and so on, they lack of eduction, lack of experience, and lack of many personal relationship with the other people.

It has been very hard and difficult for me to be on the job. Because I've an operation on my stomach. It

Cause alot of thing when tried to do something a little be hard. I've have so much to worry about my life. I'm lack of English, lack of Experience, and many social things. So I want to beg all of you government tha will you please help us and provide a fund for our children that going to start on their life. They need more education after High School and we the parent couldn't provide money for them to go to College and so on. So I will be very please that you'll take all time to understand what I'm trying to say and all the difficulties that We the Hmong Refugees are facing today in our life.

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KY

4/29/83

My name is _____, I would like to share some words to you - The officer, what is my real depression life as will be described. I have to immigrat to this country of America because I used to be soldier for Vang Pao and all the American in 1966 - 1972. The red Vietnamese had taken over our Laos country then I could not stay because I was American soldier so I had led the family to Thailand in 1975 - 1979. And led them to America, I came to state of Oregon and stay there for 2 years then began to become harder and harder life. The government had cut our money and medical, and I could not get a job to raise the family, →

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THEN I DECIDED TO MOVE TO CALIFORNIA, HERE.
I FACE ~~A~~ SIMILAR DIFFICULITY OVER HERE. THE AMERICAN
AND MEXICAN ATTEMPTED TO KILL MY FAMILY AND
MYSELF BY USING KNIFE AND GUN AND THEY
SAID TO US THAT I HADE TO MOVE AND DO NOT STAY
IN THEIR COUNTRY AND IT MADE ME VERY VERY
UNHAPPY ABOUT IT AND I WOULD LIKE TO TELL
YOU THE OFFICER TO GET TO KNOW.

I HAD WORKED TO HELP THE AMERICAN SINCE
1966-1972. MY MONTHLY SALARY WAS 17000 IN
LAO MONEY.

CAME USA T. NUMBER ___ - ___

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(1)

TO MR. YANG SHER WHO IS RESPECTED.

DEAR MR. UANG SHER.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPLAN MY FAMILY AND MYSELF'S LIVING SITUATION IN THIS COUNTRY OF AMERICA. I HAVE PROBLEM WITH ENGLISH AND WITH MY HANDICAPPED STATUS BECAUSE OF BEING AMERICAN SOLDIER IN LAOS. I WAS SOLDIER IN 1969 TO 1975. AFTER THE COMMUNIST GOT IN TO LAOS THEY SEARCHED FOR THE FORMER SOLDIER WHO HAD WORKED FOR THE AMERICAN AND KILL THEM SO WE COULD NOT STAY AND DECIDED TO LEAD THE FAMILY TO GET OUT OF LAOS TO THAILAND AND FROM THAILAND TO THE UNITED STATES ON 11/29/78. I HAD WORKED IN A COMPANY FOR TWO YEARS, AND BECAUSE I HAVE ILLNESS PROBLEM →

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AND HAD TO GO TO DOCTOR REGULARLY . NOT LONG AFTER THE COMPANY I WORKED, TOLD ME THAT SINCE I HAD ILLNESS PROBLEM AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROBLEM ALSO, THEY DID NOT HAVE WORK ENOUGH WORK FOR ME TO DO. THEREFORE I HAD TO GET OUT OF ~~MY~~ JOB AND THEN DECIDE TO TAKE THE CHANCE TO IMPROVE MY ENGLISH. I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH FOR YOU, MR. WANG SHER TO REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT FOR THE HANDICAPPED PEOPLE AND MORE PROGRAM FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

SIGNATURE:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

(#16)

APRIL 29, 1983

TO MR. VANG SHER WHO IS RESPECTED

DEAR MR. VANG SHER.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPLAIN MY FAMILY AND MYSELF'S LIVING SITUATION IN THIS COUNTRY OF AMERICA. FOR MYSELF AND THE FAMILY, WE HAVE PROBLEM WITH THE ENGLISH. WHEN I ARRIVED THE STATE OF TENNESSEE ON 10/20/79, I ATTEMPTED TO FIND FOR A JOB SINCE UNTIL NOW, JULY 18, 1982 AND STILL HAVE NO JOB AND NO ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS FOR US. FINALLY, I DECIDED TO MOVE TO CALIFORNIA TO GET ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE CLASS. WHENEVER I GAIN MY ENGLISH FOR BETTER I WILL LOOK FOR A JOB TO DO. AS I SAID, I WOULD LIKE FOR YOU, MR. VANG SHER WHO IS RESPECTED, TO →

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REQUEST THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP US MORE OF OUR ENGLISH PROGRAM TO CONTINUE THE SIMILAR PROGRAM FOR US.

I HAVE ENGLISH PROBLEM SO MUCH. IF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT CAN NOT HELP US ANYMORE, WE WON'T KNOW ANYMORE THE LANGUAGE AND HAVE NO ABILITIES TO LOOK FOR JOB TO SUPPORT OUR FAMILY IN THIS COUNTRY.

SIGNATURE:

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(17)

APRIL 2ND, 1983

I AM GLAD MR. VANG SHER.

DEAR MR VANG SHER WHO IS OUR LEADER.

FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE LIVING SITUATION IN AMERICA, I CAN NOT HELP MY FAMILY BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE. I CAME TO AMERICA ON MARCH 1, 1979. I WENT TO SEEK FOR JOB IN CITY OF SANDIEGO FOR 9 MONTHS AND COULD NOT FIND A JOB THEN I DECIDED TO MOVE TO PORTLAND, OREGON. I HAD BEEN LOOKING ~~I~~ THERE FOR 2 YEARS, BUT MY FAMILY IS SO BIG THAT I COULD NOT SUPPORT THEM ENOUGH. I WENT TO APPLY FOR WELFARE FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS MORE MONEY AND MEDICAL CARE, BUT THEY COULD NOT HELP ME EITHER. →

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I DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE, I COULD NOT GET A JOB FOR BETTER PAY JUST BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SPEAK. WHEN THEY TALK I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY TALK ABOUT AND, THAT'S MAYBE WHY THEY DON'T ACCEPT ME. AS A RESULT I DECIDED TO QUIT WORKING AND MOVED TO FRESNO FOR MORE ENGLISH CLASS TO ATTEND. WHEN I SPEAK THE LANGUAGE BETTER I WILL TRY TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER JOB.

I WANT YOU, MR. VANG SHER WHO IS THE LEADER TO GO TO REQUEST THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT TO HELP US MORE MONEY AND ENGLISH PROGRAM UNTIL WE KNOW THE LANGUAGE SO THAT WE ARE ABLE TO GET JOB TO SUPPORT OUR FAMILY AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT.

SIGNATURE.

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(13)

STEVE REDER
1914 NE MASEN
PORTLAND, OR. 97211

DEAR STEVE S REDER

THIS IS

MYSELF, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT MYSELF AND MY FAMILY LIKE HELL, AND I WANT TO LET YOU THE OFFICER TO KNOW ABOUT MY FAMILY AND MYSELF WHEN WE WERE IN LAOS. WHEN WE WERE IN LAOS WE OF COURSE HAD MANY PROBLEMS, BUT MY PEOPLE IN LAOS WE HAD EVERYTHING WE WANTED SUCH AS FOODS, CLOTHES JUST LIKE ANYBODY ELSE. MY FAMILY, WE HAD OUR OWN HOME TO LIVE IN, BUT THE RED VIETNAMESE CAME TO TAKE OUR OWN COUNTRY AND DESTROYED IT WHICH MADE US HAVE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY AND BECAME WHO WE ARE NOW. WE ARE HAVING SO MANY PROBLEMS

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I WANT TO LET THE HIGH OFFICER KNOW SO.
WHEN THE RED VIETNAMESE CAME TO OUR OWN COUNTRY
THEY DID NOT RESPECT ANYONE. THEY CAME IN AND
DID MANY VERY VERY BAD THING TO US SO WE COULD
NOT STAY AND WE DECIDED TO ESCAPE AND CAME
TO YOUR COUNTRY. HOPING THAT YOU WILL HELP US TO.
THEY EVEN FOLLOWED AND ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY OUR
LIFE WHEREVER WE WERE.

. I WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST YOUR HELP
REGARDING MY MISTAKEN AGE. THE YEAR I CAME
FROM THAILAND TO THIS COUNTRY OF AMERICA MY
REAL AGE WAS 67, BUT YOUR AMERICAN PEOPLE
CHANGED .7 TO 58. I AM PLEASED TO ASK ANYONE
WHO MAY CONCERN TO RECHANGE FOR ME. I WANT
TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I AM VERY VERY OLD
NOW AND I DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE BESIDE.

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PLEASE CHANGE IT FOR ME.

THIS IS ALL I CAN SAY

SIGNATURE:

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(19)

April 20, 1993

I would like to talk about my experience to act as soldier in 1961-1968 then I got out of the army and then became a regular person until the country was lost. After 1975 which our country was lost we escape to Thailand and then not long after, the American came to do interviewing. The American chose only the good people and the relatives had to separate in different country. This made us feel very lonely and miss each other very very much. We had helped the American with our great effort. When we arrived in this country we heard people said that the American would help $ 300 per person, but when we arrived in this country they →

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LOOK US AS NO VALUE PEOPLE AND THEY CUT $100 OFF PER PERSON AND WE DON'T KNOW WHY. DOESN'T IT THAT OUR HELPS TOWARD THE AMERICAN HAS NO VALUE? WE ARRIVED IN THIS COUNTRY OF AMERICA, WE ARE SO DUMB, WE DON'T KNOW HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT US BECAUSE SOMETIME WE GO TO WORK THEY WERE POINTING GUN AND KNIFE TO US AND SAID WOULD KILL US. IF POSSIBLE PLEASE EXPLAIN US WHY IN SOME CASES LIKE THIS.

REPORTER

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STEVE KEDER
1914 NE MASEN
PORTLAND, OR 97211

I AM HMING. NOT CAMBODIAN. I AM GLAD TO TELL YOU WHO IS RESPECTED TO KNOW THAT I HAD FOODS AND CLOTHES OR EVERYTHING IN MY COUNTRY. BECAUSE THE AMERICAN CAME TO MY COUNTRY AND BUILD THE WAR THERE. NOW I HAVE NO COUNTRY AND HAVE NOTHING. I AM VERY POOR. THE REASON I CAME TO THIS COUNTRY IS THAT I HAVE NO PARENT. THE COMMUNIST CAME AND TRIED TO KILL US SO I DIDN'T LIKE IT, THEN I HAD TO ESCAPE. I AM SO DUMB. I DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE AND I ~~AM~~ TO BE ON WELFARE. MY FAMILY ARE ALL TOGETHER 7 PEOPLE. WHEN I STAYED IN LAOS I WAS A FARMER. I WAS STUPID I COULD NOT DO ANYTHING ELSE.

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I HAD ALL THINGS I WANTED. I NEVER BEG ANYONE FOR FOODS. ONLY WHEN I CAME TO THE COUNTRY OF AMERICA I HAD TO BEG AND ASK ALL THE TIME. I AM SO DUMB, I CAN NOT THINK ANYTHING TO DO PLUS DO NOT KNOW THE LANGUAGE. IT MAKES ME VERY HARD. BECAUSE THE LANGUAGE ITSELF THAT I DON'T HAVE, I CAN NOT DO ANYTHINGESE TO HELP MY FAMILY SO WELFARE IS MY ONLY CHOICE. I LIKE TO ASK YOU TO SEE IF YOU CAN HELP ME ANYTHING. I LIKE TO ASK YOU IF YOU CAN HELP MY LIFE TO BE LIKED AMERICAN. PLEASE LOVE ME AND MY FAMILY.

MY FAMILY HAVE 7 PEOPLE IN THE FAMILY I HAVE 3 CHILDREN LOVE ME THANK YOU

FRESNO MAY 7, 1983.

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(24)

5/6/83

STEVE REDER
1914 NE MASEN
PORTLAND, OR 97211

DEAR STEVE REDER:

MY NAME IS _____ I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY FAMILY AND MYSELF'S LIFE IN LAOS AND HERE, IN AMERICA. WHEN WAS IN LAOS I WAS NOT AN EDUCATED PERSON AND I WAS FARMER FOR MY LIVING UNTILL 1970. IN 1970 UNTIL 1975 I JOINTED THE ARMY WITH THE AMERICAN IN 1975 ~~WE LOST~~ OUR COUNTRY WAS LOST TO THE ENEMY, VIETNAM. WHEN THEY CAME IN TO CITY, THEY SAID THEY WERE GOING TO KILL MY FAMILY AND MYSELF. AS WE HEARD IT WE. THE FAMILY DECIDED TO ESCAPE TO THAILAND. WE SPENT LONG TIME IN THE CAMP REFUGEE IN THAILAND AND FOUND THAT IT WAS NOT A GOOD →

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PLACE SO WE MADE ANOTHER DECISION TO COME TO THE THIS COUNTRY OF AMERICA.

SIR! I LIKE TO TELL YOU. THAT WHEN I WAS IN LAOS I HAD NEVER DEPEND ON THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP ME MONEY, I COULD SUPPORT MY FAMILY BY MYSELF AND NEED NO HELP.

NOW I AM IN AMERICA I HAVE SO MANY THINGS TO WORRY THAT I WANT TO EXPLAIN TO YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE OUR PARENT. WE MUST TELL YOU WHAT WE WANT.

1. I DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE SO I WANT YOU TO ALLOW ME TO STUDY THE LANGUAGE FIRST.

2. I DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE, I CAN NOT FIND A JOB

MY FAMIDIATE FAMILY IS 3, MY FATHER, MOTHER AND ONE SISTER BESIDE, AND WE ARE ALTOGETHER 6 PEOPLE.

BECAUSE I COULD NOT GET A JOB AT ALL SO →

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I HAVE TO APPLY FOR WELFARE TO FEED MY FAMILY. BEING ON WELFARE IS NOT SOMETHING THAT I LIKE EITHER. IT IS A NECESSITY ONLY AND I EVEN FEEL GUILTY.

SIR! YOU KNOW WHICH WAY YOU WANT ME TO WALK ON OTHER THAN BEING ON WELFARE; YOU KNOW A BETTER WAY TO COPE LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY, ANYTHING AT ALL TO IMPROVE MY NEW LIFE IN AMERICA, I WANT TO FOLLOW AND BE LIKE AMERICA.

THANKS

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(22)

1. TO ALL OFFICER.

MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW ME AND MY NAME. MY NAME IS _____ . IN LAOS I LIVES IN LUANG PRABANG. IN 1961 I JOINTED THE AMERICAN ARMY UNTILL 1976. WHEN THE COMMUNIST CAME TO LAOS THEY TOOK MY GUN AWAY FROM ME. THAT SHOWED ME THAT IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE. I LEFT MY HOME, GARDEN UTENSILS, COWS, HORSES AND FOODS BACK IN LAOS AND WENT TO THAILAND AND BECAME VERY POOR. WHAT LEFT IS MY LIFE ONLY. YOU, THE OFFICER NEED TO OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK AT MY POVERTY. THIS IS ALL FOR NUMBER ONE THING.

2. AFTER I HAVE BEEN IN THAILAND FOR A WHILE, IN 1977 I WAS INTERVIEWED FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMING TO AMERICA. WHEN I ARRIVED IN AMERICA I DO NOT KNOW THE LANGUAGE AND I FEEL: S →

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VERY DEPRESSIVE AND WORTH NOTHING. I CAN NOT DO ANYTHING I DESIRE.

MY FAMILY, WE RECEIVE JUST A LITTLE OVER A HUNDRED DOLLAR PER PERSON PER MONTH AND IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR US. I WANT TO REQUEST YOU, ALL OF THE OFFICER TO LOVE US MORE, TO LOOK UPON OUR NEEDS AND SAVE OUR LIFE.

THIS IS ALL I SAY. THANKS TO ALL OFFICERS.

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(23)

(1)

STEVE REDER
1611 NE MASEN
PORTLAND, OR 97211

A PETITION FOR ASSISTANT

I, _____ WHO IS HMONG.

WHEN I WAS IN LAOS I HAD MY HOUSE AND WE HAD OUR OWN CITY; WE HAD FARM, FIELD; WE HAD OUR OWN ANIMAL SUCH AS COWS, BUFFALOS, PIGS, DUCKS, CHICKEN AND RICE. I OWN MY OWN HOUSE. NEVER HEARD AND RENT ANYONE'S HOUSE. NEVER BEG ANYONE FOR ANYTHING TO EAT. SINCE THE THE AMERICAN CAME TO LAOS TO START THEIR ARMY UP IN LAOS AGAINST THE LAO COMMUNIST THEN I BECAME A SOLDIER IN 1970. I WAS A SOLDIER WITH VANG PAO AND THE AMERICAN TO HOLD THE COUNTRY, CITY AND VILLAGE FOR MANY YEARS. I ACHIEVE TO BE A LIEUTENANT IN 22/204/204-4.

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I HAD BEEN FIGHTING THE RED LAO COMMUNIST UNTIL 1975. BUT AFTER THE AMERICAN RETURNED HOME I WAS STILL FIGHTING WITH THE RED LAO COMMUNIST UNTOL 1979. I HAD LED A GROUP OF ARMY TO HIDE IN THE JUNGLE WITHOUT ANY FOOD, WHAT AVAILABLE IS LEAVES FOR FOODS PRIOR TO YEAR OF 1979 OR BEGINING OF 1980. I DECIDED TO LEAVE AND WENT TO THAILAND BECAUSE I THOUGHT THAT THE AMERICAN DID NOT COME TO HELP US TO FIND PEACE; THEY CAME BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO SEARCH FOR GOLD AND SILVER ONLY. WHEN THEY GOT WHAT THEY WANTED THEN THEY HAD TO RETURN HOME. AS A RESULT I DECIDED TO COME TO AMERICA, HERE, AND DECIDE TO STAY IN AMERICA. TO STAY IN AMERICA I HAVE TO REQUEST YOU, THE AMERICAN TO ASSIST US MONEY BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T HELP US,

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AND WE DON'T KNOW THE LANGUAGE AND WE WILL NEVER KNOW. I HAVE TO REQUEST YOUR HELP WHICHEVER WAY TO IMPROVE MY EDUCATION IN FUTURE FOR BEING ABLE TO SURVIVE IN THIS COUNTRY.

THANKS.

FRESNO MAY 7, 1983

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